HISTORY OF METHODISM

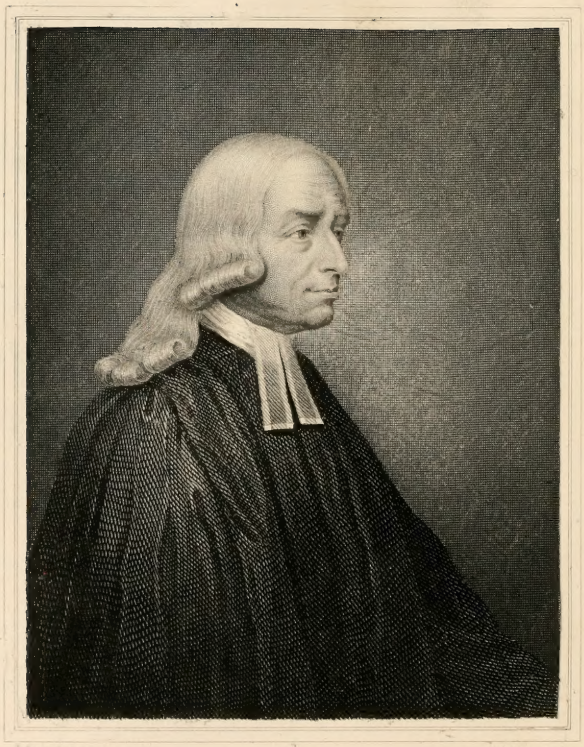


TO THE DEATH OF WESLEY

Goldwin Smith.

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H. Fuseli del. T. A. Dean sculp.

Revd. John Wesley, A. M.

HISTORY

OF

THE LIFE AND TIMES

OF

JOHN WESLEY,

EMBRACING

THE HISTORY OF METHODISM,

FROM ITS RISE TO HIS DEATH:

AND

INCLUDING BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES AND ANECDOTES OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES AND COADJUTORS.

BY ABEL STEVENS, LL.D.

NEW EDITION, CAREFULLY REVISED AND CORRECTED,
WITH NOTES, COPIOUS INDEX, AND AN APPENDIX
CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF
ALL THE WRITINGS OF JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY, &c.

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1864.

PREFACE.

As a great religious development of the last century, affecting largely our common Protestantism, and, unquestionably, destined to affect it still more profoundly, Methodism does not belong exclusively to the denominations which have appropriated its name. I have therefore attempted to write its history in a liberal spirit, and to consider it, not as a sectarian, but as a general religious movement, ostensibly within the Church of England, at least during the lives of the chief Methodist founders, but reaching beyond it to most of the Protestantism of England and America. I have endeavoured steadily to keep this point of view till the movement was reduced into sectarian organizations.

I am not aware that this plan has been followed by any of the numerous writers on Methodism, Calvinistic or Arminian, except Isaac Taylor, and Dr. James Porter in his excellent "Compendium," our best practical manual of Methodism. If Southey's life of Wesley should be considered another exception, yet its questionable purpose, and its total misapprehension of the providential design of Methodism, have deprived it, among religious readers, of any importance, aside from the romantic interests of its facts.

This comprehensive plan is not only historically just, but it affords special advantage to the variety and interest of the narrative: for whereas the Calvinistic writers, on the one side, have had as their chief characters, Whitefield, the Countess of Huntingdon, Howell Harris, Berridge, Venn, Romaine, Madan; and the Arminian authors, on the other, the Wesleys, Grimshaw,

Fletcher, Nelson, I claim them all as "workers together with God;" and the marvellous "itinerancy" of Whitefield runs parallel with the equally marvellous travels and labours of Wesley. Marking distinctly the contrasts of the Calvinistic and Arminian sections of Methodism, I have nevertheless been able to show that much more harmony existed between them, through most of their history, than has usually been supposed; that in fact the essential unity of the movement was maintained, with but incidental and salutary variations, down to the death of Whitefield. In this respect, at least, I trust my pages will teach a lesson of Christian charity and catholicity which shall be grateful to all good men who may read them; and as it is more the office of history to narrate than polemically to discuss opinions, I have endeavoured not to impair the much-needed lesson in my accounts of parties. It has been as impossible as inexpedient to dissemble my own theological opinions, but it is hoped that they will not be found unnecessarily obtruded. As the Wesleyan section of the movement was the most ostensible, and took finally an organized and permanent form, it necessarily takes the lead in the earlier part of the narrative, and will almost exclusively occupy the latter part of it. I have endeavoured, however, to give the fullest attention, required by the plan of the work, to other Methodist bodies.

The present volume brings the narrative down to the death of Whitefield, a period after which Calvinistic Methodism, though it will continue to receive due notice, loses its prominence, and the history of the movement becomes distinctly Wesleyan. Two more volumes will complete the history of British Methodism. The history of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, only alluded to in the preceding volumes so far as was necessary to the integrity of the narrative, will be given in two additional volumes. While this arrangement is legitimate to the real history of Methodism, and will afford some special conveniences to the writer, it will also have the important advantage of presenting to the reader the English history, including the fullest "Life and Times

of Wesley" yet published, and the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, each in so distinct a form as not to be dependent one on the other.

I have endeavoured to do justice to the Lay Preachers of Wesley, many of whom, though overshadowded by the leaders of Methodism, were its noblest heroes. Southey is the only writer who has said much respecting them; but he has referred to them in almost every instance for the purpose of citing proofs of his charges of fanaticism and insanity, though he could not disguise his admiration of their extraordinary characters, and they afford the chief romance of his volumes. He has given sketches of eight of them; I have given more than that number in the present volume; many, however, of historical importance, who were active during my present period, do not appear within it. The reader will hereafter find that I have not ignored their claims, but postponed them to more suitable points of the narrative.

The Ecclesiastical Economy, the Doctrines, Psalmody, Literature, etc., of Methodism are noticed as the narrative proceeds, their historical development being distinctly traced; but they will be more fully discussed in a book of the second volume.

I have authenticated the most important facts of the narrative by marginal references; in order, however, not to encumber the volume unnecessarily with notes, I have in most instances, given my authority in the beginning of each chapter, without repeating it except when some intervening reference has made it necessary. The number of publications relating to early Methodism would be incredible to ordinary readers. Whether from a curious or a hostile motive, a "Catalogue of Works that have been published in Refutation of Methodism from its origin in 1729 to 1846, compiled by H. C. Decanver," was printed in Philadelphia by John Pennington in 1846. It is not complete, but comprises the titles of no less than three hundred and eighty-four publications. The compiler was a Protestant Episcopalian; "Decanver" is his *nomme de plume;* he has given his real name in the original manuscript, which, with the printed catalogue and one hundred and

forty-three of the most curious of these works, he has deposited in the Library of the Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church in New York city. Whatever may have been his design, he has done a valuable service to Methodism, and enriched the library of that institution with the best collection of such documents in the United States, perhaps the best in the world. If we add to these the works in favour of Methodism, and others bearing directly or indirectly on its history, the list can hardly be short of fifteen hundred. Of course I have not examined all these; but I know of none necessary to my purpose which have not been consulted.

I am under many obligations to Rev. Drs. Whedon (of the Methodist Quarterly Review), Hibbard (of the Northern Christian Advocate), Holdich (of the American Bible Society), Prof. Strong, of Troy, Franklin Rand, Esq., of Boston, S. B. Wickens, Esq., New York, and most especially to R. A. West, Esq. (of the New York Commercial Advertiser), for the revision of the proofs, and important suggestions.

My task will terminate at the centenary celebration of Methodism in 1839—a period prior to the sectional disputes which have divided the Methodist Episcopal Church, and which are yet too recent for a satisfactory judgment from history.

ENGLISH EDITOR'S

PREFACE TO THE SECOND VOLUME.

This volume completes Dr. Stevens' "History of the Life and Times of Wesley,"—a history which, in incident, in clear and graphic narrative, in accuracy of detail, and in philosophical reflection, far surpasses any account of the period which has yet been written. Of the many biographers of Wesley, Southey, Richard Watson, and Dr. Smith, have hitherto held a deserved pre-eminence. Southey brought to the task a polished style, a thorough acquaintance with the history of the eighteenth century, an intense admiration of many points in Wesley's character and doctrines, and a mind stored with facts from an extensive range of reading. He, indeed, was the first to give interest to the narrative of Wesley's life; but he never understood Wesley—he treated him too much as a mere actor on the world's stage—a character who had adopted a line of action to accomplish a certain object, and hence his conclusion that ambition was Wesley's ruling motive; he could not comprehend a man whose end in life was "to save his soul, to live wholly to God;"* and he, therefore, almost ignores the religious element in Wesley's character. Not so Richard Watson; his masculine intellect fully estimated the great aim of Wesley's life—he could well appreciate feelings which indeed he had in common with Wesley; he had pondered deeply over the great mystery of salvation, and had seen in its true light how poor and contemptible the world and the world's wisdom seemed in presence of the greater wisdom that

* Wesley's first Journal.

cometh from above, and thus his biography has in it the appreciative piety of the true Christian philosopher: yet it lacks completeness; it is like all Watson's writings—a grand fragment. On the other hand, Dr. Smith has produced a history, complete, full, accurate, and thoroughly reliable; but it partakes too much of the character of a mere chronological record. Dr. Stevens has profited by the labours of these, his predecessors; to the accuracy of Dr. Smith he has added the philosophy of Watson and the polished style of Southey, and his book hereafter will be accepted as the most comprehensive and readable record of Wesley.

In this edition of the second volume, the editor has verified each statement, carefully examined every reference, and corrected the errors arising from the carelessness of printers and others. He has also added brief notes and an index, all of which he trusts will be found of service to the reader. In the Appendix he has given an account of the literature of the "Minute" controversy—a controversy in which the doctrines of Methodism were first broadly defined. He has also compiled, with considerable labour, a chronological account of the writings of John and Charles Wesley, from which the reader will be in a position to judge of the real extent of their literary labours.

In placing this volume before the English public, the editor cannot refrain from expressing how much each day's study of Wesley's character and career has impressed him with a feeling of admiration and veneration for that extraordinary man. Connected in no way with the denomination which is called by Wesley's name, and now carries out his plans, but an attached member of the church from whence Wesley sprang, he feels how much it lost by its hostility to Wesley and his coadjutors. An earnest, sincere, devoted man, seeking from the very outset of his career to save his own soul, and with the blessing of God act upon the souls and consciences of others, deserved better treatment; but the very earnestness he manifested, was in itself a rebuke to those who were sleeping while infidelity and immorality were progressing. The reader will find in the early part of Dr. Stevens' narrative, an interesting collection of

opinions as to the state of religion in England when Wesley commenced his career; but to us, the fact recorded by Whitefield in his Journal, that Wesley and his fellow Methodists had to pass through a body of mocking and jeering Oxford students whenever they went to receive the sacrament at St. Mary's Church, speaks volumes as to the low state of even religious profession at the period; and to those who are familiar with the literature of the time, with its indecencies unredeemed by wit, and its grovelling licentiousness, what further testimony is needed to prove the prevailing immorality! * True it is that in the Church of England, and among Dissenters, there were a few brilliant exceptions to the prevailing irreligion; yet the pious student can scarcely recall a name which has impressed itself upon the religious history of the country, and but for the labours of Wesley—who was indeed the centre from whence sprang the zeal of Whitefield and all his Methodist contemporaries—we can hardly speculate upon what religion would have been. It is the nature of vice to be constantly extending its circle and influence unless checked by religion; let the reader then picture for a moment the irreligion and vileness of the Kingswood colliers, of the mobs of Moorfields, of the rioters of Staffordshire, Yorkshire, and Dublin, of the miners in the north of England, acting throughout the kingdom, spreading themselves without check, or with the feeble check that the religion of the day offered, and reflect into what a depth of degradation our nation must have sunk, but for the blessing of God on the labours of these religious reformers. Wesley, we

* Dean Swift who, with all his grossness, was a keen observer, and a truthful satirist, writing only a few years prior to Wesley, and recommending in a somewhat questionable style the reading of the Bible, says, "I am sensible, few of our fine ladies are furnished with this useful book, the same being got entirely into the hands of their servants and other mean people, who are *poor enough to be good Christians.* I must therefore acquaint the quality, that the book called *a Bible* may be met with at the booksellers, Mr. Baskett having not long since ventured upon a new impression, *otherwise 'tis thought Bibles might in a small time have been out of print.*"—*A Dedication to a Great Man concerning Dedications. Dublin,* 1719.

believe, was as much an instrument in the hands of Providence for the purification of religion as Luther; and indeed many points of similarity between the earlier and later reformation present themselves; but what a contrast between Wesley and the great reformer! Wesley throughout life calm though enthusiastic, impassioned yet never passionate, holding what he deemed truth firmly, yet in controversy rarely uttering a harsh expression; rousing men by his earnestness, winning them by his gentleness. Luther, cast in a different mould, boisterous, passionate, fierce in his antagonisms, harsh in his utterances. Yet both suited to their times,—the one to an age which, questioning the power of the Church, *talked* of personal and individual piety, feeling it not; the other to a period which upheld the Church's supremacy, but ignored personal responsibility, leaving its sins of omission and commission to be compounded for by the Church. Luther's roughness roused men to think; Wesley's calmness and enthusiasm made men feel as well.

Beyond the circle of his "Societies," Wesley has never yet had justice rendered to him; the mists springing from doctrinal controversy have been permitted to obscure the noble proportions of his character, and the world generally has been content to view him through the jaundiced eyes of his religious opponents; yet few men lived a more useful life, none a more blameless one. He found religion a theory, he left it an active reality. In the endeavour to shun the Popish Scylla of justification by works, religious men were rapidly drifting towards the Charybdis of quietism. Wesley contended and showed, that real vital religion was from its very nature active, that apathy was to it unknown, that it was benevolent because it felt its responsibility, self-sacrificing in its labours because it found human life too short to accomplish all that needed to be done; and here we find the secret of Wesley's success—active piety combined with a keen sense of responsibility. He felt himself an instrument, in the hands of God, destined to accomplish a great work; and no labour was too exacting, no difficulty too great to be overcome. As a preacher he was instant in season, and, as

some might deem, out of season. Wherever he found men assembled, there he knew that souls were to be saved. On the deck of a ship, in the wilds of America, in the fields, in the highways, by the dismal mine, in the rude hut as well as in the halls of the University, he knew that he had to utter words of warning, reproof, exhortation, and comfort, to men who might never again be placed within the hearing of truth. The responsibility of a Christian minister is indeed great. He cannot, from the pulpit, utter a word which has not a mission for good or evil. The future alone will reveal the mischief effected by a thoughtless word, an ill-prepared sermon, a flight of rhetoric instead of an earnest utterance, or a trope and a figure in place of a word of rebuke. The broken-hearted publican and the self-sufficient Pharisee will alike rise in judgment against the careless preacher. How important then is it, that the man who enters upon the sacred office should feel that he is—

> "the messenger of truth,
> The legate of the skies!"

That—

> "By him the violated law speaks out
> Its thunders: and by him, in strains as sweet
> As angels use, the gospel whispers peace!"

Wesley, from the commencement to the close of his career, seems to have felt all this, and his Journals abound with expressions which show how fully he realized the importance of his mission. Rest and quiet he longed for again and again; but how could he answer it to his conscience and his God, to seek repose while he had the power to speak, and one soul remained unimpressed?

In worldly life how much do we note the influence of earnestness, wealth accumulated, high position realized, difficulties of birth and education overcome, and great achievements accomplished, by seemingly trifling means; so, in religious life, earnest zeal has, with God's blessing, carried into effect many a mighty enterprise. It is the ram's horn, at the sound of which many an idolatrous Jericho has fallen. But the great feature of earnestness is, that it reproduces

itself: thus, an earnest man cannot exist alone; he infuses, as it were, a portion of his soul into all with whom he comes in contact. Such was Wesley; the electric current, having its origin in his earnestness, now pervades the world, and in the noblest religious enterprises of our day marks how his spirit still lives and acts. The study of such a life, then, cannot but be beneficial; and in the pages now before the reader there will be found much for reflection, much to animate, and much to encourage; and we doubt not that the perusal will lead many to unite with us, and thousands in both hemispheres, in thanking God that Wesley ever lived.

H.

STOKE NEWINGTON, *July*, 1864.

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HISTORY OF METHODISM.

BOOK I.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

STANDPOINT OF METHODISM IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY.

Christianity is Spiritual Life—The Church an Organic Form of this Life—The Philosophical Standpoint of the History of Methodism—Progress of Corruption in the Early Church—The Reformation incomplete—Condition of the English Church prior to Methodism—Literary and Moral Aspects of England—Popular Degradation—Characteristics of Methodism.

Had a studious heathen sought to ascertain the nature of the Christian religion, immediately after the completion of its canonical records, and solely from those records, he would have been surprised by its contrast with nearly all prior religious systems, in its suggestion rather than prescription of ecclesiastical arrangements, its general abstinence from ritual forms, and its total abstinence from dogmatic definitions. He would have discovered what modern Protestantism, emancipated from traditional influence, has found, that the purification of the individual man, pursued in his individual freedom, and on the responsibility of his individual conscience, is the characteristic design of Christianity—rites and creeds, as aids to faith, being left discretionary, however necessary.

Christianity is spiritual life. "The words that I speak unto you," said its Founder, "they are spirit, and they are life;"* and

* John vi. 63.

he declared the distinctive character of the new dispensation, when at the well of Sychar he said, "Believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."*

A development of Judaism, which was characterized above all other religions of antiquity by ritual forms and penal morals, Christianity, nevertheless, quickly distinguished itself by the simplicity of its ceremonies and the mild purity of its ethics, subordinating both to the interior moral life which it taught, as "the regeneration,"† the "life of God"‡ in the soul of man.

A true Christian Church is a collective or organic form of this spiritual life; its external institutions, whether in doctrinal symbols, or modes of worship or government, are valuable only so far as they can be means to this end. And therefore any new practical measures which may be rendered expedient, by the ever-varying conditions of human history, for the effectiveness of the Church in the moral regeneration of individual men, are admissible, being in harmony with the original purpose and simplicity of the Gospel, however they may contravene ecclesiastical precedents or traditions.

Such is the standpoint which Methodism takes in the history of the Church; and such the only standpoint from which its own history can be interpreted. Throughout the extraordinary series of events which we are about to narrate from its annals, we shall find continually this recurrence to the first principles of Christianity. This is the philosophy of its history.

Ecclesiastical history records how Christianity came to lose its original spiritual simplicity, and to grow into a gigantic system of ecclesiasticism and ritualism, which was more symbolic than Judaism itself, and under the shadow of which, personal spiritual life, and even the popular morals, withered, and seemed really, if not avowedly, superseded by Church rites.

The apostles, while yet observing some of the Judaic rites for the sake of expediency, wrote against them, nevertheless, as void under the new dispensation.§

In planting Christianity they adopted such forms as were found most convenient to their hands in the religious customs of

* John iv. 21, 23, 24. † Matt. xix. 28. ‡ Eph. iv. 18.
§ Compare Acts xv. 7–31, xvi. 3, xxi. 20–26; Col. ii. 20–23.

their countrymen; but it is remarkable that scarcely one feature of their ecclesiastical system, if such it can be called, was borrowed from the divinely prescribed forms of the Levitical institute.

For generations, the primitive Christians had no temples, but worshipped, with familiar simplicity, in private houses, or in the synagogues of converted Jews which were scattered over the Roman empire. The synagogue, unmentioned, not to say unenjoined, in the writings of Moses, afforded them also most of those simple rites and offices which afterwards became technicalized and dignified into essential and even sacramental importance. When the distribution of the charities of the Church became too laborious for the Apostles, they copied from the synagogue the office of Deacon. The older servants of the Church, having oversight of its Deacons and general interests, were called Elders (Presbyters), a title borrowed from the head of the Jewish "tribe," and the members of the Sanhedrim. The designation of these men to their offices was made by imposition of hands, a decency, but not a sacrament, derived also from the Jews, who used it in the inauguration of their municipal and provincial officers, but never in the consecration of their priests. But how soon these simple offices became essential orders, awful with divine authority, and mysterious with divine virtue! How, for more than fifteen hundred years, have controversies respecting their distinctions and prerogatives agitated Christendom! How has the simple form of the imposition of hands become the divine rite of Ordination, a sacramental mystery, with its fabulous but disastrous consequence of the Apostolic Succession, leading to the exclusion of the purest bodies of Christian men, who could not verify their claims to it, from the charities of the Church, and to the general perversion of Christianity by priestly and prelatical pretensions! The offices of Deacon and Elder became fundamental and unchangeable; the Elder presiding in the assembly of his peers as the ruler of the synagogue presided in the college of elders,* became Bishop, but very different from the Scriptural "superintendent;" the Bishop became Archbishop, the Archbishop, Pope or Patriarch; the two Sacraments became seven;—the confessional and penance; the monastic life, asceticism, celibacy, and virginity; the idolatry of the host, and the worship of saints; extreme unction, purgatory, infallibility, and dogmatic symbols; the supererogative merit of works, canonization, perse-

* As *primus inter pares*.—Vitringa, De Vet. Syn., lib. iii. cap. 16.

cution, and the Inquisition;—these, with the priestly assumption of civil authority, the loss of ancient civilization, and the general degradation of the masses, make up most of the subsequent history of the Church down to the period in which the Reformation uttered its appeal back to the apostolic age.*

During all these ages of corruption, however, the spiritual Church existed, represented in the persons of devout men, who walked with God amid the night of error, sufferers from the evils of their times, unable to explain or to break away from them, but seeking, in their monastic cells, or in the walks of ordinary life, that purification and peace which are received only by faith; and the ecclesiastical historian finds grateful relief, as he gropes through the dark ages, in being able continually to point to these scattered lights, which, like the lamps in Roman tombs, gleamed faintly but perennially amid the moral death of the visible Church. Obscure communities, also, as the Cathari of the Novatians, the Paulicians, the Albigenses, and the Waldenses, maintained the ancient faith in comparative purity, from the beginning of the fourth century down to the Reformation.

In the year 1510 an Augustinian monk walked, with desolate heart, the streets of Rome, and turning away from the pomp of her churches and the corruptions of the Vatican, sought relief to his awakened soul by ascending, on his knees, with peasants and beggars, the staircase of Pilate, which was supposed to have been trodden by Christ at his trial, and is now enclosed near the Lateran palace. While pausing on the successive steps to weep and pray, a voice from heaven seemed to cry within him, "The just shall live by faith." It was the voice of apostolic Christianity, and the announcement of the Reformation. He fled from the superstitious scene. Seven years later, the same monk nailed on the gate of the church at Wittenberg the *Theses* which introduced the Reformation. They were as trumpet blasts echoing from the Hebrides to the Calabrias, and summoning Europe to a moral resurrection.

But though the doctrine of "Justification by Faith" was thus the dogmatic germ of the Reformation, that great revolution took chiefly an ecclesiastical direction, and became more an attempt to overthrow the organic system of Popery, by the reassertion of certain apostolic doctrines, than an evangelical revival of the

* On the origin and changes of Church government, I have followed Archbishop Stillingfleet's *Irenicum;* Lord King's *Primitive Church;* Neander's *History of the Christian Religion;* Archbishop Whately's *Kingdom of Christ;* and especially Vitringa's *De Synagoga Vetere.*

spiritual life of the Church; hence its early loss of moral power. All Western Europe felt its first motions; but hardly forty years had passed when it reached its furthest conquests, and began its retreats. During most of the eighteenth century it could have propagated its doctrines with but little restraint in the greater part of Europe, but it had not internal energy enough to do so. Dealing ostensibly with the historical pretensions of the Church, it introduced at last the "Historical Criticism," which, notwithstanding its inestimable advantages to Biblical exegesis, degenerated, under the English deistical writings that entered Germany about the epoch of Methodism, into Rationalism, and subverted both the spiritual life and the doctrinal orthodoxy of the continental Protestant churches, and, to a great extent, substituted infidelity for the displaced Popery. Besides this tendency, the Lutheran Reformation retained many Papal errors in its doctrines of the sacraments and of the priestly offices, and erred, above all, in leaving the Church subject to the State. It did not sufficiently restore the spirituality and simplicity of the apostolic Church, and our own age witnesses the spectacle of a High-Church reaction in Germany, in which some of her most distinguished Christian scholars attempt to correct the excesses of Rationalism by an appeal, not so much to the apostolic Church as to the anti-Nicene traditions. A Puseyism as thorough as that which flourishes under the Papal attributes of the Anglican Establishment, prevails in the strongholds of the German Reformation.*

In like manner was the English Reformation incomplete. Not only did it retain many Papal errors in doctrine, especially respecting the sacraments, the priestly offices, the hierarchal constitution of the Church, and its relation to the State, but by these very errors it failed to restore adequately the primitive idea of Christianity, as "the kingdom of God within you." Hence its frequent lapses towards Popery. Hardly had it been established under Henry VIII., and nourished under the brief reign of Edward VI., than it fell away under Mary, and its noblest champions, Cranmer, Latimer, Hooper, and Ridley, perished at the stake. Elizabeth restored it, but Charles I. again favoured its Papal tendencies. His queen was a Papist. Archbishop Laud restored pictures to the churches, and embroiled the kingdom with controversies respecting copes, genuflections, and the position of the altar. The Court of High Commission displaced devout

* The evangelical world has been scandalized to find so eminent an opponent of Rationalism as Hengstenberg leading the High-Church reaction. With him are associated such men as Stahl, Leo, and Gerlach.

clergymen for not observing petty ceremonies. After the great Rebellion, Charles II. did what he could to favour the Papists, and died one himself.* His brother, James II., devoted his whole reign to the restoration of Popery. The Revolution, with the accession of the Prince of Orange to the throne, alone put an end to these Papal efforts of the acknowledged "head" of the British Church, and even then many of its most influential incumbents refused to recognize the title of the new Protestant king; the Archbishop of Canterbury, with several bishops, and four hundred clergymen, sacrificed their offices rather than take the oath of allegiance to him. So far was the divine right of prelacy still kindred with the divine right of royalty.

During all these Papal struggles primitive ideas of Christianity and the Church were more or less active among the people. Even before the reign of Elizabeth much popular discontent prevailed with the but partial purification of the Church from Papal errors. Her Act of Uniformity threw multitudes out of its pale, and Puritanism began its work of reformation and honest rebellion. But Puritanism, with all its virtues, had profound and inexorable vices. It early created a High-Churchism of its own, and claimed a higher Scriptural authority for Presbyterianism than the English reformers, or its great Episcopal antagonists, Jewell, Whitgift, Hooker, and others, asserted for prelacy itself.† The vigour of its Commonwealth has made the name of England illustrious in the history of the world; but the reaction under the Restoration spread over the country as great, if not greater, demoralization, than had preceded it under the Papal reigns. The court became a royal brothel. The play-house became the temple of England. The drama of the day could not now be exhibited, nor even privately read without blushes. Many of the most learned and devoted clergymen, whose writings are imperishable in our religious literature, were either silenced or displaced. The ministrations of the Church grew formal and ineffective: the Nonconformist Churches themselves at last fell into general decay, while the masses of the people sank into incredible vice and brutality. A living English writer has declared that England had lapsed into virtual heathenism, when Wesley appeared ‡

The literature of the eighteenth century, particularly of its earlier part, is an important index to the moral character of that period. It presents a brilliant catalogue of names, among which

* Macaulay's History of England, vol. i. chap. 4.
† See Art. on Hooker, North British Review, 1857.
‡ Isaac Taylor: Wesley and Methodism.

are Addison, Steele, Berkeley, Swift, Pope, Congreve, Gray, Parnell, Young, Thomson, Rowe, Goldsmith, and Johnson, besides a splendid array in the more profound departments of knowledge. The reader may easily conceive what must have been the moral aspects of English society, when the loose wit of Congreve was the attraction of the British theatre, and, as Dryden declared, "the only prop of the declining stage;" or what the respect of the people for the Church when, among the clergy, could be found men like Swift and Sterne, to regale the gross taste of the age with ribald burlesque and licentious humour. And what were the popular fictions of the day? Richardson gave way before Smollett and Fielding. The latter obtained a renown which renders them still familiar; while Richardson, whom Johnson deemed "as superior to them in talents as in virtue," is barely remembered. The works of these and similar authors were the parlour-table books of the age; while on the same table lay also the erotic poets of antiquity, translated by the wits of the period, with Dryden at their head, dedicated to the first ladies of the court, and teeming with the pruriency which pervades the polite writings of that and the preceding age. Dryden died at the beginning of the century, and his works, as full of vice as of genius, were in general vogue.

The infidel works of Hobbes, Tindal, Collins, Shaftesbury, and Chubb, were in full circulation, and were reinforced by the appearance of the three greatest giants in the cause of sceptical error which modern times have produced—Bolingbroke, Hume, and Gibbon. The first was influential by his political eminence, and by the adornments which the harmonious verse of Pope gave to his opinions; the second by all the arts of insinuation, and by a style which, says Sir J. Mackintosh, "was more lively, more easy, more ingratiating, and, if the word may be so applied, more amusing than that of any other metaphysical writer;" and the last by weaving his infidel sentiments into one of the greatest works of the human intellect, a production as corrupt in its religious tendency as it is magnificent in its execution. The intelligent reader need not be reminded that the same class of writers had triumphed, and were at this time in full prevalence across the channel. The Encyclopedists had attempted the design of eradicating from the circle of the sciences every trace of Christian truth; and the polite writers of France, headed by Voltaire and Rousseau, had decked the corrupt doctrines of the day with the attractions of eloquence and poetry, humour and satire, until they swept over the nation like a sirocco, withering not only the senti-

ments of religion, but the instincts of humanity, and subverting at last, in common ruin, the altar, the throne, and the moral protections of domestic life. Notwithstanding the inveterate antipathies which existed between the two nations, the contagion of French opinions, both in religion and politics, infected England seriously during most of the eighteenth century. The continental infidelity had, in fact, sprung from the English deism, and naturally reacted upon it.

It is worthy of remark, that one of the most interesting departments of the English literature of the last century owes its birth to the alarm which the better-disposed literary men of the age took at the general declension of manners and morals, and their attempt to check it. The *British Essayists* are technically distinguished in our literature. They form a department which has become classical. They have been reprinted more extensively than any other books in our language, except the Scriptures and a few of our most popular fictions. Some of the brightest names in the catalogue of English writers owe much of their fame to these works; among them may be mentioned Steele, Addison, Berkeley, and Johnson. They were conducted as ephemeral sheets, and issued twice or thrice a-week, with brief articles, which discussed the follies and vices of the times. Their character was generally humorous or sarcastic; occasionally they contained a sober rebuke of the irreligion of the day.

The first in the list is the "Tatler," projected by Steele, and to which Addison was a frequent contributor. It was almost exclusively confined to the superficial defects of society, and is the best picture extant of the domestic, moral, and literary condition of the early part of that century. The "Spectator," conducted jointly by Addison and Steele, followed the "Tatler," and is still one of the most popular works of our language. Next appeared the "Guardian," projected by Steele, and aided by Addison, Pope, and Berkeley. A long list of miscellaneous writers of the same class followed, who have been placed, by public opinion, in the rank of the classical essayists. Dr. Johnson, in his "Rambler," restored the periodical essay to its first dignity, and gave it a still higher moral tone.

Though these writers aimed, at first, more at the correction of the follies than the sins of the times, they grew serious as they grew important. It is curious to observe their increasing severity as they obtained authority by time and popularity. Steele, from a long and various study of the world, painted, with minute accuracy, its absurdities. Addison, with a style the most pure, and a

humour mild and elegant, attempted to correct the literary taste of the day, and to shed the radiance of genius on the despised virtues of Christianity. He rescued Milton from the neglect which the sublime religious character of his great epic had incurred for him from the degenerate age. Pope satirized, in some admirable critiques, the literary follies of the times. Berkeley attacked, with his clear logic and finished style, the sceptical opinions which were then prevalent; most of his articles are on "Free-thinking." Johnson, "the great moralist," stood up a giant to battle, with both hands against all error and irreligion, whether in high places or low places.

These writings exerted an influence upon the tastes and morals of the age; but it was comparatively superficial. Gay, who was contemporary with Addison and Steele, says it was incredible to conceive the effect they had on the town; how many thousand follies they had either quite banished or given a very great check to; how much countenance they had added to virtue and religion. Hannah More has devoted a chapter in her *Education of a Princess* to this interesting portion of our literature. She speaks in the highest terms of Addison's influence, and confirms these statements respecting the moral condition of the age: "At a period when religion," she says, "was held in more than usual contempt, from its having been recently abused to the worst purposes, and when the higher walks of life exhibited that dissoluteness which the profligate reign of the second Charles made so deplorably fashionable, Addison seems to have been raised up by Providence for the double purpose of improving the public taste and correcting the public morals. As the powers of imagination had, in the preceding age, been peculiarly abused to the purposes of vice, it was Addison's great object to show that vice and impurity have no necessary connection with genius. He not only evinced this by his reasonings, but he so exemplified it by his own compositions as to become, in a short time, more generally useful, by becoming more popular, than any writer who had yet appeared. This well-earned celebrity he endeavoured to turn to the best of all purposes; and his success was such as to prove that genius is never so advantageously employed as in the service of virtue; no influence so well directed as in rendering piety fashionable."

But while these writers were commendable for the elevated purpose which they proposed—a purpose noble as it was novel among what are called polite authors—their influence was comparatively ineffective; it was infinitely short of what was necessary; it was moral, but not religious. It was on the side of

Christianity, but had nothing to do with those great evangelical truths which are the vital elements of Christianity, and in which exists its renovating energy. It is the diffusion of these truths among the popular mass that alone can effect any general moral elevation of men. It was reserved for the agency of Methodism to revive and spread them, with a transforming efficacy, through the British empire and much of the civilized world. Reference has been made to these authors, therefore, only as instances of the conviction felt by the better-disposed literary leaders of the day, that some new check was necessary to stop the overwhelming progress of corruption. The pictures of vice which they exhibited, and the manner in which they attempted the necessary reform, show that society was not only deplorably wicked, but that adequate means for its recovery were not understood by those who lamented its evils.

Natural religion was the favourite study of the clergy, and of the learned generally, and included most of their theology. Collins and Tindal had denounced Christianity as priestcraft; Whiston pronounced the miracles to be Jewish impositions; Woolston declared them to be allegories; and the next year after the recognized date of Methodism, Edelmann* and Reimarus introduced the English deism into Germany, and thus founded the Rationalism which, as developed by her "Historical" or "Negative "Criticism," has nearly extinguished her religious life. The decayed state of the English Church, in which Methodism was about to have its birth, was, in fine, the cause, direct or indirect, of most of the infidelity of the age, both at home and abroad, Arianism and Socinianism, taught by such men as Clarke, Priestley, and Whiston, had become fashionable among the best English thinkers. Some of the brightest names of the time can be quoted as exceptions to these remarks; but such was the general condition of religion in England. The higher classes laughed at piety, and prided themselves on being above what they called its fanaticism; the lower classes were grossly ignorant, and abandoned to vice, while, the Church, enervated by a universal decline, was unable longer to give countenance to the downfallen cause of truth.

This general decline had reached its extremity when Wesley and his coadjutors appeared. "It was," to use his own words, "just at the time when we wanted little of filling up the measure of our iniquities, that two or three clergymen of the Church of

* Edelmann's "Moses mit Aiefgedecktem Angesicht," was published in 1740. Art. *Criticism*, Herzog's Encyclopædia, translated by Bomberger. Philadelphia, 1858.

England began vehemently to call sinners to repentance."* His own testimony to the irreligion of the times is emphatic. "What," he asks, "is the present characteristic of the English nation? It is ungodliness. Ungodliness is our universal, our constant, our peculiar character."

From the Restoration down to the origin of Methodism, Churchmen and Nonconformists bear concurrent, and in some instances startling testimony respecting the decayed condition of religion and morals. The pathetic lamentation of Bishop Burnet, on the state of the Church, has often been quoted: "I am now," he says, "in the seventieth year of my age; and as I cannot speak long in the world in any sort, so I cannot hope for a more solemn occasion than this of speaking with all due freedom, both to the present and to the succeeding ages. Therefore I lay hold on it, to give a free vent to those sad thoughts that lie on my mind both day and night, and are the subject of many secret mournings." He proceeds to say: "I cannot look on without the deepest concern, when I see the imminent ruin hanging over this Church, and, by consequence, over the whole Reformation. The outward state of things is black enough, God knows; but that which heightens my fears rises chiefly from the inward state into which we are unhappily fallen." Referring to the condition of the clergy, he says: "Our Ember-weeks are the burden and grief of my life. The much greater part of those who come to be ordained are ignorant to a degree not to be apprehended by those who are not obliged to know it. The easiest part of knowledge is that to which they are the greatest strangers. . . . Those who have read some few books, yet never seem to have read the Scriptures. Many cannot give a tolerable account even of the Catechism itself, how short and plain soever. . . . This does often tear my heart. The case is not much better in many who, having got into orders, come for institution, and cannot make it appear that they have read the Scriptures, or any one good book, since they were ordained; so that the small measure of knowledge upon which they got into holy orders not being improved, is in a way to be quite lost; and then they think it a great hardship if they are told they must know the Scriptures and the body of divinity better before they can be trusted with the care of souls."†

Watts declares that there was "a general decay of vital re-

* Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part III. Works, vol. viii. p. 196.
† Pastoral Care; Preface to the 3rd Edition, 1713.

ligion in the hearts and lives of men;" that "this declension of piety and virtue" was common among Dissenters and Churchmen; that it was "a general matter of mournful observation among all who lay the cause of God to heart;" and he called upon "every one to use all just and proper efforts for *the recovery of dying religion in the world*."* Another writer asserts that the Spirit of God has so far departed from the nation, that "hereby almost all vital religion is lost out of the world."† Another says: "The present modish turn of religion looks as if we began to think that we have no need of a Mediator, but that all our concerns were managed with God as an absolute God. The religion of nature makes up the darling topics of our age; and the religion of Jesus is valued only for the sake of that, and only so far as it carries on the light of nature, and is a bare improvement of that kind of light. All that is restrictively Christian, or that is peculiar to Christ—everything concerning Him that has not its apparent foundation in natural light, or that goes beyond its principles—is waved, banished, and despised."‡

Archbishop Secker says: "In this we cannot be mistaken, that an open and professed disregard to religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age." "Such," he declares, "are the dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world, and the profligate intemperance and fearlessness of committing crimes, in the lower, as must, if this torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal." He further asserts that "Christianity is ridiculed and railed at with very little reserve, and the teachers of it without any at all;"§ and this testimony was made but one year before that which is commemorated as the epoch of Methodism. About the same time Butler published his great work on the Analogy between Religion and the Constitution and Course of Nature, as a check to the infidelity of the age. In his preface he gives a deplorable description of the religious world. He concurs with the preceding authorities in representing it as in the very extremity of decline. "It is come," he says, "to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is no longer a subject of inquiry; but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were

* Preface to An Humble Attempt toward the Revival of Practical Religion. Ed. 1735.

† Hurrion's Sermons on the Holy Spirit, p. 21, Ed. 1734.

‡ Dr. Guyse's Twelve Sermons at Coward's Lecture, 1729.

§ Eight Charges, 1738.

an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule."

Southey says: "The clergy had lost that authority which may always command at least the appearance of respect; and they had lost that respect also by which the place of authority may sometimes so much more worthily be supplied. In the great majority of the clergy, zeal was wanting. The excellent Leighton spoke of the Church as a fair carcase without a spirit. Burnet observes that, in his time, our clergy had less authority, and were under more contempt, than those of any other Church in Europe; for they were much the most remiss in their labours, and the least severe in their lives. It was not that their lives were scandalous; he entirely acquitted them of any such imputation; but they were not exemplary, as it became them to be; and in the sincerity and grief of a pious and reflecting mind, he pronounced that they would never regain the influence which they had lost, till they lived better and laboured more." *

A scarcely less prejudiced writer on Methodism admits that when Wesley appeared the Anglican Church was "an ecclesiastical system under which the people of England had lapsed into heathenism, or a state scarcely to be distinguished from it;" and that Methodism "preserved from extinction and reanimated the languishing Nonconformity of the last century, which, just at the time of the Methodistic revival, was rapidly in course to be found nowhere but in books."†

Such was the moral condition of England when Methodism came forth from the gates of Oxford, not to revive the ecclesiastical questions over which Churchmen and Puritans had fought and exhausted each other, nor even to appeal to the Reformation, with its incomplete corrections of Popery, but to recall the masses to their Bibles, which said so little about those questions, but which declared that "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation;" that it "is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Acknowledging the importance of sound doctrine, it nevertheless dealt mostly in the theology which relates to the spiritual life—Faith, Justification, Regeneration, Sanctification, and the Witness of the Spirit; these were its great ideas, and never, since the apostolic age, were they brought out more clearly. Wesley formed no creed for the English Methodists, and though some of his own writings

* Life of Wesley, ch. 9. † Taylor's Wesley and Methodism, pp. 51, 54.

are recognized in his chapel deeds, and by the civil courts, as the standard of Methodist doctrine, yet from their number and the great variety of subjects treated in them, a rigorous system of interpretation has become impossible. In providing an organization for Methodism in the New World, where it was destined to have its chief range, he so abridged the Articles of the Church of England as to exclude the most formidable of modern theological controversies, and make it possible for Calvinists, alike with Arminians, to enter its communion; he prescribed no mode of baptism, but virtually recognized all modes; and it has been doubted, incautiously perhaps, whether even a Restorationist or Universalist, if exemplary in life, could be adjudged a heretic by its creed.

Methodism reversed, in fine, the usual policy of religious sects, who seek to sustain their spiritual life by their orthodoxy; it has sustained its orthodoxy by devoting its chief care to its spiritual life, and for more than a century has had no serious outbreaks of heresy, notwithstanding the masses of untrained minds gathered within its pale, and the general lack of preparatory education among its clergy. No other modern religious body affords a parallel to it in this respect.

Admitting the absolute necessity of Church economics, it would not admit that they were in any particular form fundamental, but that the kind and degree of moral life possessed by any body of men claiming to be a Church, constituted the proof or refutation of that claim. It admitted the Scriptural example, but not the Scriptural obligation of two orders in the ministry. It adopted but one as expedient in its English Conference, while it provided both for America. It admitted the Scriptural example of ordination by the imposition of hands, but waved it in England for the sake of peace with the National Church, and ordained its ministry simply with prayer and exhortation, until within a few years, when it was adopted, not as necessary, but as appropriate. It pretended to no Episcopal form of organization in England, but provided one for America—a Presbyterian Episcopacy—Wesley, a Presbyter, ordaining a bishop, and thus practically denying High Churchism. It founded a lay ministry of Travelling Preachers, Local Preachers, and Exhortors. It adopted the Band-meeting, the Class-meeting, the ancient Agape or Love-feast. It was, in fine, a system of vital doctrines and practical expedients—a breaking away from all old dead-weights which had encumbered the march of the Reformation—a revival Church in its spirit, a missionary Church in its organization.

Such is the standpoint of Methodism in the history of the Church; and, thus considered, its historians do not, perhaps, claim too much when, with the suggestive writer who has attempted to give us its rationale, they insist that "the Methodism of the last century, even when considered apart from its consequences, must always be thought worthy of the most serious regard; that, in fact, that great religious movement has, immediately or remotely, so given an impulse to Christian feeling and profession, on all sides, that it has come to present itself as the starting-point of our modern religious history; that the field-preaching of Wesley and Whitefield, in 1739, was *the event whence the religious epoch, now current, must date its commencement;* that back to the events of that time must we look, necessarily, as often as we seek to trace to its source what is most characteristic of the present time; and that yet this is not all, for the Methodism of the past age points forward to the next-coming development of the powers of the Gospel."*

CHAPTER II.

THE WESLEY FAMILY.

Providential Preparations—The Epworth Rectory—Susanna Wesley, the Foundress of Methodism—Her Father, Dr. Annesley—Her Independence of Opinion—Her Marriage—Her Beauty—Her Intellectual Character—Her Religious Character—Her Husband, Samuel Wesley—His Ancestors—Bartholomew Westley and John Westley—Their Sufferings for Conscience Sake—The Rector of Epworth—His Good Humour—Remarkable Anecdotes—Life at the Rectory—Characteristics of the Children—The Household Education—Mrs. Wesley Conducts Religious Worship in the Rectory—Domestic Sorrows—Destruction of the Rectory by Fire—John Wesley's Providential Escape.

Man's extremity, says Augustine, is God's opportunity. While Secker was deploring the demoralization of England, as threatening to "become absolutely fatal," and the aged Burnet saw "imminent ruin hanging over the Church," and "over the whole Reformation;" while Watts was writing that "religion was dying in the world," and Butler that "it had come to be taken for granted that Christianity was no longer a subject of inquiry, but at length was discovered to be fictitious;" when, in fine, the Anglican Church had become "an ecclesiastical system, under

* Isaac Taylor's Wesley and Methodism, Preface.

which the people of England had lapsed into heathenism," and "Nonconformity was rapidly in course to be found nowhere but in books,"* and, meanwhile, across the Channel, rationalistic infidelity was invading the strongholds of the Reformation, and the French philosophers were spreading moral contagion through Europe, God was preparing the means, apparently disconnected, but providentially coincident, which were to resuscitate the "dying" faith, and introduce the era of modern evangelism in the Protestant world. A young man, bred in an inn at Gloucester, and struggling for his education, as a servitor at Oxford, was seeking, in agony of spirit, for a purer faith than he could find around him, and, as he tells us, "lying prostrate on the ground, for whole days, in silent or vocal prayer." In a few years his eloquence, never, perhaps, surpassed in the pulpit, was to startle and illuminate all England, and the American Colonies from Maine to Georgia.† From the mountains of Wales a youth of fortune entered, later, the same university as a gentleman commoner ;‡ he was to become the foreign administrator of Methodism, its first bishop in America, the founder of its missions in both Indies, and of that whole missionary scheme which, in our day, enrols a larger number of converts from heathenism than all other Protestant missions combined. From the mountains of Switzerland came into England, meanwhile, a young man who was to become the champion of the Arminian theology of the new movement, and the intimate counsellor of its leader, and whose saintly life was to leave with it a greater blessing than the works of his pen.§

But its chief agents were in obscure preparation in the village of Epworth, a rural community of Lincolnshire, with a population, at the time, of about two thousand souls, occupied in the cultivation and manufacture of hemp and flax. In the household of the Epworth Rectory can be traced its real origin, amid one of those pictures of English rural life which have so often given a charm to our literature, and which form, perhaps, the best example of the domestic virtues of religion that Christian civilization has afforded. An "elect lady" there trained the founder and legislator of Methodism, and in no inconsiderable degree, by impressing on him the traits of her own extraordinary character; and, under the same nurture, grew up by his side its psalmist, whose lyrics were to be heard, in less than a century, wherever the English language was spoken, and to be more devoutly com-

* Isaac Taylor's Wesley and Methodism.
† Gillies' Life of Whitefield.
‡ Drew's Life of Coke.
§ Benson's Life of Fletcher.

mitted to memory, and oftener repeated upon a death-bed, than any other poems.*

The mother of the Wesleys was the mother of Methodism, says a writer who has given us the philosophy of its history,† and she properly belongs to the foreground of our narrative. She was "nobly related," being the daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley, who was the son of a brother of the Earl of Anglesea.‡ She inherited from her father those energetic traits of character which she transmitted to her most distinguished child.

Dr. Annesley was one of the leading Nonconformist divines of his day. Like his grandson, he was noted at Oxford for his piety and diligence; he served the National Church as chaplain at sea, and as parish priest at Cliff, in Kent, at St. John the Apostle's, and at St. Giles's, two of the largest congregations in London. Under the Act of Uniformity, the inherent energy of the family showed itself with him, as afterwards with his daughter and grandson, in a calm but determined independence. He refused to conform, and endured a series of severe persecutions, which were attended by many of those remarkable interpositions that distinguish the later history of the family. One of his persecutors fell dead while signing a warrant for his apprehension. He became a leader of the Puritans during the troubles of the times, preaching almost daily, providing pastors for destitute congregations, and relief for his ejected and impoverished brethren. "Oh how many places," exclaims one of his contemporaries, "had sat in darkness, how many ministers had been starved, if Dr. Annesley had died thirty years since."§ After a ministry of more than half a century, and of sore trials, under which he never once faltered, he died December 31st, 1696, exclaiming, "I shall be satisfied with thy likeness: satisfied, satisfied." De Foe, who sat under his preaching, has drawn his character as perfect, in an elegy. The Nonconformists considered him a second St. Paul.‖ Richard Baxter pronounced him totally devoted to God.¶ He was endeared to all who knew him inti-

* Southey's Life of Wesley, chap. 21.

† Taylor: Wesley and Methodism, p. 19.

‡ Adam Clarke's Wesley Family, vol. i. p. 362.

§ Dr. Daniel Williams, in Annesley's Funeral Sermon, republished by Wesley in the Arminian Magazine, vol. xv.

‖ Dunton's "Life and Errors," p. 95. This noted publisher, who ranks by the side of Dodsley in the English typography of the last century, was Annesley's son-in-law.

¶ Adam Clarke's Wesley Family, vol. i. p. 375.

mately, and his noble relative, the Countess of Anglesea, desired, on her death-bed, to be buried in his grave.* He had a manly countenance and dignified person; a rich estate, which he devoted to charity; robust health, which was capable of any fatigue; and "a large soul," says Clarke, "flaming with zeal." "He was an Israelite, indeed," exclaims Calamy, "sanctified from the womb."† Cromwell esteemed him, and appointed him Lecturer at St. Paul's.

He accorded to his daughter the independence of opinion which he claimed for himself, and while yet under his roof, and not thirteen years old, she showed her hereditary spirit by examining the whole controversy between Churchmen and Dissenters, and by renouncing, in favour of the Established Church, the opinions to which her father had devoted a life of labour and suffering. The fact is characteristic; and, judging from the evidence of her later history, she possessed, even at this early age, an unusual fitness for such an investigation. Devout, thoughtful, amiable, and beautiful, she was the favourite child of her father, and the change of her opinions produced no interruption of the affectionate ties which had bound them together.

She was married to Rev. Samuel Wesley, about 1689, when nineteen or twenty years of age. She had been thoroughly educated, and was acquainted with the Greek, Latin, and French languages. She showed a discriminative judgment of books and men, and, without any unique trait of genius, presents, perhaps, one of the completest characters, moral and intellectual, to be found in the history of her sex. She has left us no proof of poetical talent, and the genius of her children in this respect seems to have been inherited from their father, whose passionate love of the art, and unwearied attempts at rhythm, if not poetry, may also account for the hereditary talent of the family in music.

A portrait of Susanna Wesley, taken at a later date than her marriage, but evidently while she was still young, affords us a picture of the refined and even elegant lady of the times. The features are slight, but almost classical in their regularity. They are thoroughly Wesleyan, affording proof that John Wesley inherited from his mother not only his best moral and intellectual traits, but those also of his physiognomy. Her dress and coiffure are in the simplest style of her day, and the entire picture is marked by chaste gracefulness. It lacks not, also, an air of that

* Dunton's "Life and Errors," p. 280.

† Nonconformists' Memorial, vol. i. Anthony à Wood's sketch of him (Athenæ Oxoniensis) is evidently a Jacobite caricature.

high-bred aristocracy from which she was descended.* Adam Clarke, whose uxorious fondness shows him to have been no inapt judge, says she was not only graceful but beautiful. Sir Peter Lely, the painter of the "beauties" of his age, has left a portrait of one of her sisters, who was pronounced a woman of rare charms. "One," says Clarke, "who well knew them both, said, beautiful as Miss Annesley appears, she was far from being as beautiful as Mrs. Wesley." The learned commentator lingers with heartiest admiration before her image. He assures us that he could not repress his tears while contemplating her Christian and womanly virtues, and her more than manly struggles with adversity. "Such a woman," he says, "take her for all in all, I have not heard of, I have not read of, nor with her equal have I been acquainted. Such an one Solomon has described in the last chapter of his Proverbs; and to her I can apply the summed up character of his accomplished housewife. Many daughters have done virtuously, but Susanna Wesley has excelled them all." In his comment on Solomon's sketch of the Jewish matron, he again refers to the lady of Epworth rectory as the best exemplification he knew of the Scriptural portrait.

An exact balance of faculties was the chief characteristic of her intellect. With this she combined a profound piety. Her early interest in the Nonconformist controversy shows that from her childhood, religion, even in some of its intricate questions, had engaged her thoughts. Her healthful common-sense is manifest in all her allusions to the subject. Her womanly but practical mind never fell into mysticism; and when her sons were wavering under its influence at Oxford, her letters continually recalled them to wholesome and Scriptural sentiments. "I take Kempis," she writes to John, when he was poring over the pages of the *Imitation*— "I take Kempis to have been an honest, weak man, who had more zeal than knowledge, by his condemning all mirth or pleasure as sinful or useless, in opposition to so many direct and plain texts of Scripture." And again she wrote: "Let every one enjoy the present hour. Age and successive troubles are sufficient to convince any man that it is a much wiser and safer way to deprecate great afflictions than to pray for them, and that our Lord knew what was in man when he directed us to pray: 'Lead us not into temptation.' I think heretic Clarke,†

* Clarke (Wesley Family), with his usual learned detail, traces the Anglesea family back beyond the Conquest. He adds: "I find that Mrs. Wesley signed some of her letters with the Annesley arms."

† Dr. Samuel Clarke.

in his exposition on the Lord's Prayer, is more in the right than Castaniza concerning temptations."

With unusual sobriety on religious subjects, she united a cheerful confidence in her own religious hopes. She consecrated an hour every morning and evening to entire seclusion for meditation and prayer; her reflections at these times were often recorded, and present the happiest blending of good sense and religious fervour. "If," she exclaims, in one of her evening meditations, "if comparatively to despise and undervalue all the world contains, which is esteemed great, fair, or good; if earnestly and constantly to desire Thee—Thy favour, Thy acceptance, Thyself—rather than any or all things Thou hast created, be to love Thee—I do love Thee."*

Her independent habit of thinking led her early to Socinian opinions, but they were abandoned after matured investigations. Her letters are marked not only by just but often by profound thought. She projected several literary works, and a fragment which remains on the "Apostles' Creed," would not have been discreditable to the theological literature of her day. She had begun a work on Natural and Revealed Religion, comprising her reasons for renouncing Dissent, and a discourse on the Eucharist, but both were destroyed by a fire which consumed the rectory.†

Her husband, the Rev. Samuel Wesley, was born at Whitchurch, in 1662, and was her senior by seven years.‡ His character was contrasted in important respects with her own; but he shared fully her conscientious independence of opinion on religious questions. With him as with her, this seems to have been an hereditary trait, and was transmitted by them both to their children. The characteristics of the founder of Methodism were indeed continually revealing themselves in the ancestral history of the family. Samuel Wesley's grandfather, Bartholomew Westley,§ after serving the Established Church in several parishes,

* Moore's Life of Wesley, i. 3. Clarke is very justly scandalized at the epitaph which Charles Wesley wrote for her tomb, and which represents her as in "a legal night" till her seventieth year—a period at which she attained, as we shall hereafter see, a clearer sense of her acceptance with God, while receiving the Lord's Supper from her son-in-law, Mr. Hall.

† Letter to her son, Rev. S. Wesley. Whitehead's Life of Wesley, i. 4.

‡ Clarke, in his Wesley Family, vol. i. p. 88, and vol. ii. p. 2, contradicts himself respecting his age. Methodist writers speak with uncertainty of the year of Mrs. Wesley's birth. Clarke (vol. ii. p. 1) gives it as 1669 or 1670. Her epitaph, in Bunhill Fields, says she was aged seventy-three at her death in 1742. This determines the year of her birth as 1669.

§ Such was the original orthography of the name. Clarke thinks it may be of Arabic origin, and that the family came from Spain. Beal ("Wesley

under Charles I., joined the Puritan party. He was ejected at the Restoration, and obstinately refusing to conform, lived by the practice of medicine, a persecuted outcast, not allowed by the Five Mile Act to approach within five miles of any of his former parishes, or any borough town, but preaching, meanwhile, as he had opportunity, till the treatment and premature death of his son, occasioned by a like conscientious independence of opinion, "brought his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."* We know little else of him than these brief characteristic facts of his sufferings. Calamy says he was, when an old man, and the vigour of life had gone, "as tender-hearted and affectionate as he had been pious and prudent."

His son, John Westley, under whose afflictions the veteran dissenter sunk into the grave, was true to the independent and vigorous character of his father. He was educated at Oxford, where he excelled in oriental studies. He seems not to have sought ordination, but during Cromwell's power, preached at various places, at one time to seamen, at others in rural churches. He was remarkable for his religious zeal, and, like several others of his family, kept strict notes of his interior life in a diary. At the Restoration he had scruples against the use of the Common Prayer. He was cited before the Bishop of Bristol for his irregularities, and told by the prelate that if he continued to preach, it must be "according to order, the order of the Church of England, upon ordination." "What," he replied,

Fathers") gives it a good Saxon origin. There are traces of the name in Dorsetshire as early as the fourteenth century, a period before which, Camden tells us, surnames were not common in England, families being designated by localities. Smith (History of Wesleyan Methodism, book i. chap. 2) says there were in Dorsetshire certain portions of land formerly called *hides*, *vils* (fields), and *manors*, distinguished by the names Wantesleigh, Wynesleigh, Wansley, and Westly. Hutchins, the historian of Dorsetshire, says there is a hamlet in Broadwindsor called Wansley, Wantsley, Wantsleigh, and Wanslew, and further observes that there are twenty acres of land in Hook called West Leas. "This latter statement," remarks Smith, "probably affords a key to the whole case. *Lea*, in Saxon, signifies a place, and in English an enclosed piece of cultivated or pastured land. Such a place, designated by its bearing, would be called Westlea, and might have given the original of the family name." John de Wyntereslegh, vicar of Frampton, in 1363; George Westley, treasurer of Sarum, 1403; John Westley, rector of Langton Matravers, 1481; John Wannesleigh, rector of Bettiscomb, 1497; and John Wennesley, chaplain of Pillesdon, 1508, were all, both persons and places, in the same county and same neighbourhood where the great-grandfather of John Wesley resided; there can be little doubt that they were ancestors of Samuel Westley, as the father of the founder of Methodism wrote his name at Oxford.

* Southey's Wesley, chap. i.

"does your lordship mean by an ordination? If you mean that sending spoken of in Romans x. 2, I had it." "I mean that," rejoined the bishop. "What mission had you? You must have it according to law and the order of the Church of England." "I am not satisfied in my spirit of that," was the truly Wesleyan reply; "I am not satisfied in conscience touching the ordination you speak of." He proceeded to vindicate his preaching by its good results, the approval of good men, and his entire devotion to it. "I am glad I heard this from your own mouth," replied the prelate. "You will stand to your principles, you say?" "I intend it, through the grace of God, and to be faithful to the king's majesty, however you deal with me." "I will not meddle with you," said the bishop, perceiving, doubtless, what kind of man he was dealing with. "Farewell to you, sir," was Mr. Westley's only reply. "Farewell, good Mr. Westley," responded his lordship.*

Here was the germ of the ministerial system which afterwards flourished under his grandson; a kind of epitome of Methodism, says Clarke. He was a "lay preacher, and he was an itinerant evangelist." "It cannot," continues Clarke, "escape the reflection of the reader, that Methodism, in its grand principles of economy, and the means by which they have been brought into action, had its specific, healthy, though slowly vegetating seeds, in the original members of the Wesley family."†

The good impression which he left upon the mind of the Bishop of Bristol, could not save him from imprisonment shortly after. He was released by an order of the King's Council, in 1661, but was seized while leaving his church, in the next year, and again thrust into prison. A leading magistrate of the county, however, bailed him out. Soon afterwards the Act of Uniformity came into effect; Westley would not yield to it; he stood up amid his weeping people, and preaching a farewell discourse, left them, to become an outcast and a wanderer. The remainder of his history is a series of affecting sufferings; but they were borne with intrepid stedfastness. On leaving his congregation at Whitchurch, he took his family to Melcombe, but the local authorities hunted him there, imposing upon him a fine, and upon his landlady the forfeiture of twenty pounds. He took refuge in Ilminster,

* Calamy (Nonconformists' Memorial, vol. ii. pp. 165—171) has preserved the interesting dialogue at length. Moore quotes it, Life of Wesley.

† Clarke infers from the "escalop shell" on the family arms, that some of its ancestors had been in the Crusades; whether this is the fact or not, the crusading spirit seemed hereditary and ineradicable in the Wesleyan constitution.

Bridgewater, and Taunton, living on the charity of their dissenting churches. His sufferings at last touched the sympathies of a wealthy gentleman, who gave him a house free of rent, in the village of Preston, near Weymouth. There he found a retreat for almost two years, when the Five Mile Act drove him out of his comfortable refuge. He sheltered his family at Poole, preaching there as he found opportunity, but living in the country to escape the new law. Four times was he imprisoned, once for half a year, and in another instance for three months. He thought of seeking shelter in America, but about the year 1670* found it in heaven. He sank into the grave, under his many trials, at the early age of thirty-four, bearing with him the broken heart of his father, whose admiration of his independence and zeal could not sustain his own spirit in its painful sympathy with his tried and faithful son. His sufferings, says Southey, have given him a place among the confessors of the Nonconformists. Calamy has left us evidence that John Westley was alike devout and firm, and an able theologian.† He lies in the churchyard of Preston; such was the spirit of the times that the vicar would not allow him to be buried in the church.‡

Weak character is indicated as often, perhaps, by strong as by feeble opinions, for opinions are mostly prejudices; and on theological subjects, and especially on ecclesiastical questions, where so much must always be doubtful, liberality must always be more wise as well as more generous than dogmatism. It should be borne in mind, however, that if the Westleys were tenacious of their later sentiments, this very fact proves that they were not so of their earlier opinions. They conquered, at least, the prejudices of education. Opinions on the questions for which they suffered were deemed, in their day, to be more fundamental than they have been considered since the epoch of Methodism. They were still

* Clarke says 1678, at the age of 42.

† Nonconformists' Memorial, vol. ii. pp. 164—175.

‡ Southey's Life of Wesley, chap. i. One of Wesley's circuit preachers makes an affecting reference to this good and brave man's grave: "In the churchyard no stone tells where his ashes lie, nor is there a monument to record his worth. The writer would not seem to affect anything; yet to this village (which he visits regularly, as a small Wesleyan chapel is there) he does not go without remembering the vicar of Whitchurch. In this and that house, lonely dell, and retired spot, he seems to see the man whose spirit was *crushed*, the Christian hunted to obscurity, and the minister whose lamp, though lighted in the skies, was wickedly quenched by the triumphant spirit of persecution; and he is no stranger to the hallowed spot where his mortal part is deposited." —Beal's *Wesley Fathers*, p. 109.

matters of conscience, and strong souls are always strongest in matters of conscience. The opposition of Bartholomew and John Westley to the Common Prayer, and other ecclesiastical requisitions of the times, was more a protest against bigotry than bigotry itself; and by the progress of such dissent has the Anglo-Saxon mind reached its later and more forbearing liberality.

Such were the immediate ancestors of Samuel Wesley, the rector of Epworth, and father of the founder of Methodism. The rector himself had a robust soul, and early proved that he inherited the ancestral spirit of his family. Designed for the ministry of the Nonconformists, and trained by so many domestic examples and sufferings to sympathize with their cause, he was appointed to prepare a reply to some severe invectives which had been published against them. In attempting the task, "he conceived that he saw reason to change his opinions."* Rising one morning very early, and without acquainting any person with his design, he set out on foot for Oxford, and entered himself as a "poor scholar" at Exeter College. He had but two pounds five shillings in his pocket when he arrived there, and received during his collegiate life but one crown as assistance from his friends. Strong in the characteristic energy and methodical habits of his family, he successfully prosecuted his studies, supporting himself by his pen and by instructing others as a tutor. We have but few glimpses of his Oxford life; they show, however, the genuine Wesleyan character. He was laborious, devout, and not forgetful of those whom the Church of the day seemed most inclined to forget—prisoners and the wretched poor. He visited the former in the castle, relieving their necessities and ministering to their souls; and when his sons afterwards became notorious at Oxford for similar labours, he was able to write to them: "Go on, in God's name, in the path into which your Saviour has directed you, and that wherein your father has gone before you."

Wesleyan in his economy as in his liberality, he was able at last to leave college for London with more than ten pounds in his pocket. Dunton, his London publisher, had married a daughter of Dr. Annesley, and introduced his young friend to the family. The acquaintance ripened at last into his marriage with Susanna Annesley. After beginning his clerical life as a curate, with twenty-eight pounds a-year, and receiving a chaplaincy aboard the fleet, at seventy pounds, he took charge of a curacy in London at thirty pounds, which, however, he doubled by the tireless industry

* Samuel Wesley: Adam Clarke's Wesley Family, vol. i. p. 97.

of his pen. While in the city he gave a remarkable instance of his hereditary spirit. The "Declaration" of James II. was ordered to be read in the churches; and the court party, deeming Wesley a talented partisan, promised him preferment, as a motive for his support of the measure. He was poor, and living in lodgings with his wife and one child; but he spurned the overture, and believing the Declaration to be a Papal design, he not only refused to read it, but ascended the pulpit and denounced it in a sermon from the text, "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

We next find him in the curacy of South Ormsby, near Epworth, with fifty pounds a-year. Here his family increased to six children; but, with true English paternity, he welcomed each addition as a gift from God, and struggled manfully to provide bread for every new comer. He says, in a letter to the Archbishop of York, that he had but fifty pounds a-year for six or seven years together, and one child at least per annum. The parish had been obtained for him by the Marquis of Normanby; a characteristic instance of conduct led to its resignation. This nobleman, says John Wesley, had a house in the parish, where a woman who lived with him usually resided; she insisted on being intimate with Mrs. Wesley, but to such an intercourse the rector would not submit. Coming in one day, and finding the intrusive visitant sitting with his wife, he went up to her, took her by the hand, and unceremoniously led her out. The nobleman resented the affront, and made it necessary for Wesley to retire from the living. The dedication of one of his works to Queen Mary procured him the rectory of Epworth, where, on two hundred pounds a-year, and the proceeds of his literary labours, he sustained and educated his numerous family, amounting at last to nineteen children.

His poetical mania kept him busily at work "beating rhyme," as he called it. Poem after poem came forth to the public from the rectory study. Besides his elaborate works detailing in verse which was more rhythmical than poetical, "The Life of Christ," and "The History of the Old and New Testaments," less pretentious, but really better productions, were continually emanating from his pen. His most valuable publication was a Latin dissertation on the book of Job. He had the rare fortune of dedicating volumes to three successive queens of England;

but as popular, not royal sovereignty, wields the sceptre of fate in the world of letters, the royal sanction has not been able to save them from oblivion. Their few worm-eaten remnants have no other interest than that which arises from the later historical importance of the family name. The Latin dissertation on Job evinces profound learning; and he was doubtless competent to have prosecuted successfully, under more favourable circumstances, a grand scheme which he had projected for a new edition of the original Scriptures, on a plan very similar to that more lately accomplished by Bagster. Pope was intimate with the rector, and in a letter to Swift, says, "I call him what he is, a learned man, and I engage you will approve his prose more than you formerly did his poetry." Dunton says he used to write two hundred couplets a-day. The current of his verse was so rapid as to carry with it all the lighter rubbish off its banks, and to sink whatever of weighty value was cast upon it.

He plied faithfully, meanwhile, his parish labours. He knew all his parishioners, and visited them from house to house, keeping a record of his visits. His preaching was pointed, and he quailed not when it gave offence. Bad livers in the parish resented it, as they did also his party politics, by wounding his cattle at night, cutting off the legs of his house-dog, breaking his doors, and by twice setting fire to his house. His conduct towards them was sometimes as prompt as in the case which occasioned his resignation at Ormsby. Many of them vexed him not a little about the tithes, and at one time they would pay only in kind. Going into a field where the tithe corn was laid he discovered a person cutting the ears with a pair of shears, and filling with them a bag brought for the purpose. Without saying a word, he seized the astonished parishioner by the arm, and led him into the market-place of the town, where he opened the bag, turned it inside out before the multitude, and declaring what the pilferer had done, walked quietly away, leaving him confounded before his neighbours.

He did not disguise his High Church and State principles, and his imprudent political zeal involved him in serious persecutions. Besides the injuring of his cattle and the burning of his house, the rabble drummed, shouted, and fired arms under his windows at night. Under the pretext of a small debt, which he could not at the moment discharge, he was arrested while leaving his church, and imprisoned in Lincoln Castle, where he continued about three months. But his native spirit never failed him. "Now I am at rest," he wrote from the prison to the Archbishop of York, "for

I am come to the haven where I have long expected to be; and," he characteristically adds, "I don't despair of doing good here, and, it may be, more in this new parish than in my old one." Like Goldsmith's good vicar, he immediately became a volunteer chaplain to his fellow-prisoners. He read prayers daily, and preached on Sundays to them. He was consoled by the fortitude of his noble wife: "'Tis not every one," he wrote again to the Archbishop, "who could bear these things; but I bless God, my wife is less concerned with suffering them than I am in writing, or than I believe your Grace will be in reading them." "When I came here," he said in another letter, "my stock was but little above ten shillings, and my wife's at home scarce so much. She soon sent me her rings, because she had nothing else to relieve me with, but I returned them." When advised to remove from Epworth, on account of his persecutions, he replied in an answer which reminds us of his son, when hooted by mobs in his itinerant preaching, "'Tis like a coward to desert my post because the enemy fires thick upon me. They have only wounded me yet, and I believe cannot kill me."

The energy of his character and the tenacity of his opinions were, doubtless, faulty virtues. They led him into not a few unnecessary sufferings, and bordered sometimes on insanity. A fact is told of him which would be incredible if related on less authority than that of John Wesley himself. He informs us that his father, observing one evening, at the close of family prayers, that his wife did not respond "Amen" to the prayer for the king, asked her the reason. She replied that she did not believe in the title of the Prince of Orange to the throne. "If that be the case," rejoined the rector, "we must part, for if we have two kings, we must have two beds." "My mother," says Wesley, "was inflexible." Her husband went to his study, and soon after took his departure, and returned not until about a year had elapsed, when the death of the king, and the accession of Queen Anne, whose title neither questioned, allowed him to go back without violating his word. Their conjugal harmony was restored, and John Wesley himself was the first child born after their reconciliation. This very singular incident seems not to have been attended with any severe recriminations; it was as cool as it was determined and foolish; it was made a matter of conscience by both parties, and both were immovably but calmly resolute in all conscientious prejudices. As an illustration of character, it indicates worse for the good sense than the good heart of the rector, for through the robust nature of this man of sturdy opinions flowed a current of

habitual good-humour, and humour, more than apparent conscientiousness itself, reveals truthfully the heart, as it is an affection, if not a virtue, which has the rare peculiarity of being necessarily genuine, and when even associated with satire, is so, more from a genial and instinctive disposition to relieve, than to add to its sting. Southey says of Samuel Wesley's early poems, that his imagination seems to have been playful, and had he written during his son's celebrity, some of his pieces might perhaps have been condemned by the godly as profane.* Clarke assures us that he had a large share of vivacity; that in private conversation he was very entertaining and instructive, having a rich fund of anecdote, and a profusion of witty and wise sayings. He shows that the hearty rector relished practical jokes so well, as to be led sometimes to trench with them on sacred ground, where even a useful lesson could hardly redeem them.†

* Southey's *Early English Poets.* Adam Clarke demurs to the latter point. The veteran commentator was, however, himself not very squeamish.

† The Epworth parish clerk was a well-meaning and honest, but an obtrusively vain man. His master, the rector, he esteemed the greatest character in the parish, or even in the county, and himself, being second to him in church services, as only second to him, also, in importance and title to general respect. "He had the privilege of wearing Mr. Wesley's cast-off clothes and wigs, for the latter of which his head was by far too small, and the figure he presented was ludicrously grotesque. The rector, finding him particularly vain of one of the canonical substitutes for hair, which he had lately received, formed the design to mortify him in the presence of that congregation before which John wished to appear in every respect what he thought himself in his near approach to his master. One morning before church-time Mr. W. said: 'John, I shall preach on a particular subject to-day, and shall choose my own psalm, of which I shall give out the first line, and you shall proceed as usual.' John was pleased, and the service went forward as usual till they came to the singing, when Mr. Wesley gave out the following line—

'Like to an owl in an ivy bush.'

This was sung; and the following line, John, peeping out of the large canonical wig in which his head was half lost, gave out with an audible voice, and appropriate connecting twang—

'That rueful thing am I.'

The whole congregation, struck with John's appearance, saw and felt the similitude, and could not refrain from laughter. The rector was pleased, for John was mortified, and his self-conceit lowered."—Clarke's *Wesley Family*, vol. i. p. 357. This anecdote was questioned in the Wesleyan Magazine, for 1824. Clarke replies, that he had it from John Wesley himself, and, as near as he can possibly recollect, in the very words given." He adds, what may be as relevant to our pages as to his own, that it is characteristic of the man, and it is from facts of this nature that the author forms a proper estimate of the character he describes. The harmless weakness of the aged clerk seems to have made

Adam Clarke, to whom we are indebted for our most interesting, if not most important information respecting Samuel Wesley, and who evidently found in him a kindred nature, took pains to inquire on the spot respecting his character and labours, and discovered aged parishioners to whom the memory of the man and pastor was still dear. They bore grateful testimony to his pastoral fidelity and his devoted piety, as well as his eccentricities. He had the zealous energy of his Methodist sons, and had it not expended itself in incessant literary labours, it would probably have led him into extraordinary evangelical schemes, like those which resulted in Methodism. He did, indeed, conceive a plan of gigantic missionary efforts, which, it cannot be doubted, he would have heroically prosecuted, had it not been defeated by the neglect of the Government. It comprehended St. Helena, India, and China, and reached even to Abyssinia, taking in the foreign British territories as posts from which to extend the gospel to the heathen. The written sketch of the scheme, signed by the Archbishop of York, still remains. Wesley offered to attempt it in person, if the Government would sanction it, and provide a humble subsistence for his family. Clarke contends that it was entirely practicable to the English Church and Government. It was an anticipation of the missionary enterprise of Methodism; but the time for it had not yet come. His wife was unconsciously preparing for it in the nursery at Epworth, while her husband was discussing it with prelates and statesmen.

A prophetic anticipation of the approaching revival of the Protestant faith seemed to linger in this good man's mind down to his last hour. When dying he laid his hand repeatedly on the head of his son Charles, saying: "Be steady; the Christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom; you will see it, though I shall not." And to another of his children he said: "Do not be concerned at my death, God will then begin to manifest Himself to my family."* He died attesting the doctrine of the Witness of

him quite a "character" in the Epworth circle, and the humour of the hard-working rector was doubtless often refreshed by his comicalities. Clarke says, "This is the same man who, when King William returned to London, after some of his expeditions, gave out in Epworth church, 'Let us sing, to the praise and glory of God, a hymn of my own composing:

'King William is come home, come home,
King William home is come;
Therefore let us together sing
The hymn that's called Te D'um.'"

* Letter of Charles Wesley: Wesley Family, vol. i. p. 346.

the Spirit, afterwards so emphatically preached by the founders of Methodism. "He had a clear sense of his acceptance with God," says John Wesley. "The inward witness," he said, "the inward witness, that is the proof, the strongest proof of Christianity."* The family gathered around his bed to take the Lord's Supper with him for the last time; but he was hardly able to receive it. "God chastens me with strong pain," he exclaimed before departing; "but I praise Him for it, I thank Him for it, I love Him for it." At the moment when one of his sons finished the Communion prayer he expired.

His character, sufficiently delineated in our narrative, is not without marked defects; but it is admirable for its genuine English manhood, its healthful piety, its brave independence of opinion, and the endurance of life-long struggles with poverty, besides other and complicated trials.

Such were the parents and ancestors of the Wesley family.

The glimpses which we get from contemporary records of the interior life at the rectory of Epworth, give us the image of an almost perfect Christian household. If some of its aspects appear at times too grave, or even severe, they are relieved by frequent evidence of those home affections and gaieties with which the beneficent instincts of human nature are sure to resist, in a numerous circle of children, the religious austerities of riper years. The Epworth rectory presents, in fine, the picture of a domestic church, a family school, and a genuine old English household. Before the first fire the building was a humble structure of wood and plaster, roofed with thatch, and venerable with a hundred years. It boasted one parlour, an ample hall, a buttery, three large upper chambers, besides some smaller apartments, and a study, where the studious rector spent most of his time in "beating rhymes," and preparing his sermons, leaving the rest of the house and almost all in-door affairs, as well as the management of the temporalities of the glebe and tithes, to his more capable wife, and fondly comforting himself against the pinching embarrassments of poverty with the consolation, as he expresses it in a letter to the Archbishop of York, "that he who is born a poet, must, I am afraid, live and die so, that is, poor." John Wesley expresses admiration at the serenity with which his mother transacted business, wrote letters, and conversed, surrounded by her thirteen children. All the children bore "nicknames" in the home circle, and the familiar pseudonyms play fondly through the

* Letter of John Wesley: Wesley Family, vol. i. p. 344.

abundant family correspondence which remains. Clarke assures us that "they had the common fame of being the most loving family in the county of Lincoln." The mother especially was the centre of the household affections. John, after leaving home, writes to her at a time when her health was precarious, with pathetic endearment, and expresses the hope that he may die before her, in order not to have the anguish of witnessing her end. "You did well," she afterwards writes him, "to correct that fond desire of dying before me, since you do not know what work God may have for you to do before you leave the world. It is what I have often desired of the children, that they would not weep at my parting, and so make death more uncomfortable than it would otherwise be to me." The home where such sentiments prevailed could not have been an austere one.

The children all shared this filial tenderness for the mother. Martha (afterward Mrs. Hall) clung to her with a sort of idolatry. She would never willingly be from her side, says Clarke; and the only fault alleged against the parent was her fond partiality for this affectionate child.* Several of the nineteen children died young, but, according to the allusion of John Wesley, already quoted, thirteen were living at one time. Some of them were remarkable for beauty, others for wit and intelligence. Samuel, the eldest son, was poetic from his childhood, and has left some of the finest hymns of the Methodist psalmody.† Susanna (afterwards Mrs. Ellison) is described as "very facetious and a little romantic;" Mary, though somewhat deformed, as "having an exquisitely beautiful face—a legible index to a mind almost angelic," and "one of the most exalted of human characters, full of humility and goodness;" Mehetabel (Mrs. Wright) as able, in her eighth year, to read the Greek language, and as "gay, sprightly, full of mirth, good-humour, and wit, and attracting

* Mrs. Hall's beautiful character and sad history form the most romantic and touching story in the "Wesley Family." Her affection for John was stronger than the love of woman, and she resembled him in person to a remarkable degree. Her domestic life was blighted by the deepest sorrows, which were sustained, however, with unmurmuring patience. Clarke gives their affecting details. She dined often with Dr. Johnson at Bolt Court; he ardently admired her, and even wished her to reside in his house with Mrs. Williams and Mrs. du Moulin. Boswell mentions his unusual deference towards her, and her striking resemblance to John Wesley, "both in figure and manner." See Boswell's Johnson.

† Among them are those beginning: "The morning flowers display their sweets;" "The Lord of Sabbath let us praise;" "Hail, Father, whose creating call;" "Hail, God the Son, in glory crown'd;" "Hail, Holy Ghost, Jehovah, third," etc.

many suitors," and later in life an elegant woman, "with great refinement of manners, and the traces of beauty in her countenance." She had also an uncommon poetic talent. The few letters of Keziah that remain show vivacity and vigorous sense. Charles and John gave distinct promise, even in the nursery, of their coming greatness. The natural temper of the latter, in youth, is described as "gay, with a turn for wit and humour."* The former was "exceedingly sprightly and active, and remarkable for courage and skill in juvenile encounters with his school-fellows when at Westminster. Later, he laments that he lost his first year at Oxford in diversions.† Martha, who lived to be the last survivor of the original Wesley family, though habitually sober, if not sad, amid the pastimes of the household circle, had an innate horror of melancholy subjects. Her memory was remarkable, and was abundantly stored with the results of her studies, especially in history and poetry. Her good sense and intelligence delighted Johnson in discussions of theology and moral philosophy. Of wit, she used to say that she was the only one of the family who did not possess it.

Though method prevailed throughout the household, its almost mechanical rigour was relaxed at suitable intervals, in which the nursery, with its large juvenile community, became an arena of hilarious recreations, of "high glee and frolic."‡ Games of skill and of chance even, were among the family pastimes, such as John Wesley afterward prohibited among the Methodists. While the rectory was rattling with the "mysterious noises," so famous in the family history, we find the courageous daughters "playing at the game of cards."§

The educational system at the rectory has been the admiration of all who have written respecting the Wesley family. It had some extraordinary points. It was conducted solely by Mrs. Wesley, who thus combined the labours of a school with the

* Moore's Life of Wesley, ii., 1. "He appeared," says the Westminster Magazine, "the very sensible and acute collegian; a young fellow of the finest classical taste, of the most liberal and manly sentiments."

† Smith's History of Wesleyan Methodism, i., chap. 3.

‡ Clarke—whose monograph sketches of the family are the best, because the most "gossiping" history we have of it. My unreferred quotations are all from him. He seems to take pleasure in correcting the common impression that Wesley's early education was unduly severe. The reader will excuse me if he thinks my pages show an excess of sympathy with this design; for Epworth, not Oxford, was the cradle of Methodism.

§ Original letters of Rev. John Wesley and his friends, by Dr. Priestley. Birmingham, 1791. See App. to Southey's Wesley.

other and numerous cares of her household. She has left a long letter addressed to John Wesley, in which it is fully detailed. "The children," she says, "were always put into a regular method of living, in such things as they were capable of, from their birth; as in dressing and undressing, changing their linen, etc. The first quarter commonly passes in sleep; after that they were, if possible, laid in their cradle awake, and rocked to sleep; and so they were kept rocking till it was time for them to awake. This was done to bring them to a regular course of sleeping, which at first was three hours in the morning, and three in the afternoon; afterwards two hours, till they needed none at all." When one year old, and in some cases earlier, they were taught to "cry softly," by which means they escaped abundance of correction, and that "most odious noise" of the crying of children was rarely heard in the house; but the family usually lived in as much quietness as if there had not been a child among them. Drinking and eating between meals was never allowed, unless in cases of sickness, which "seldom happened." They retired at eight in the evening, and were "left in their several rooms awake, for there was no such thing allowed in the house as sitting by a child till it fell asleep." To subdue the will of the child was one of the earliest tasks, "because," she continues, "this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which both precept and example will be ineffectual. But when this is thoroughly done, then a child is capable of being governed by the reason and piety of its parents, till its own understanding comes to maturity, and the principles of religion have taken root in the mind." Her children were taught to be quiet at family prayer, and to ask a blessing immediately after, by *signs, before they could kneel or speak.*

The family school was opened and closed with singing; at five o'clock in the afternoon all had a season of retirement, when the oldest took the youngest that could speak, and the second the next, to whom they read the Psalm for the day, and a chapter in the New Testament. She herself also conversed each evening with one of her children on religious subjects, and on some evenings with two, so as to comprehend the whole circle every week.* Cowardice and fear of punishment, she remarks, often lead children to contract a habit of lying, from which it is difficult for them to break away in later life. To prevent this, a law was

* This fact is mentioned in the letter to her husband, February 6, 1712, in which she defends the public worship that she conducted at the rectory.—Moore's "Life of Wesley," i. 3.

made that whoever was charged with a fault, of which he was guilty, should not be chastised if he would ingenuously confess it, and promise to amend. No child was ever punished twice for the same fault; and if he reformed, he was never afterwards upbraided with the offence. Promises were to be strictly observed. No girl was taught to work till she read correctly; she was then kept to her work with the same application, and for the same time, that she had spent in reading. "This rule," wisely remarks the mother, "is much to be observed; for the putting children to learn sewing before they can read perfectly, is the very reason why so few women can read in a manner fit to be heard." None of them were taught to read till they were five years old, except one daughter, and she was more years in learning than any of the rest had been months. The day before a child began to study the house was set in order, every one's work appointed, and a charge given that none should come into the room from nine till twelve, or from two till five, which were the school-hours. One day was allowed the pupil to learn its letters, and each of them did in that time know them all, except two, who were a day and a-half at the task, "for which," she says, "I then thought them very dull." Samuel, who was the first child thus taught, learned the alphabet in a few hours. The day after he was five years old he began to study, and, as soon as he knew the letters, he proceeded to spell out the first chapter of Genesis. The same method was observed by them all. As soon as they acquired the knowledge of the alphabet, they were put to spelling and reading one line, then a verse, never leaving it till perfect in the appointed lesson, were it shorter or longer.

Such was the family school at Epworth. Who can doubt that the practical Methodism of the rectory, more than any other human cause, produced the ecclesiastical Methodism which to-day is spreading the Wesleyan name around the world? It received there, also, much of its thoroughly spiritual tone. Religion impressed the habitual life of the family. Susanna Wesley was its priestess, and, more than the rector himself, ministered to the spiritual necessities of the household. During his absence she even opened its doors for a sort of public worship, which was conducted by herself. She read sermons, prayed, and conversed directly with the rustic assembly. Her husband, learning the fact by her letters, revolted, as a Churchman, at its novelty. Her self-defence is characteristically earnest, but submissive to his authority. "I chose," she says, "the best and most awakening sermons we had. Last Sunday, I believe, we had above two

hundred hearers, and yet many went away for want of room. We banish all temporal concerns from our society; none is suffered to mingle any discourse about them with our reading and singing. We keep close to the business of the day, and as soon as it is over they all go home. And where is the harm of this? As for your proposal of letting some other person read, alas! you do not consider what a people these are. I do not think one man among them could read a sermon without spelling a good part of it; and how would that edify the rest? Nor has any of our family a voice strong enough to be heard by such a number of people." Her husband equally hesitated to approve or disapprove the extraordinary proceeding. Very soon she assembled round her a larger audience than had usually met at the church itself. Some of the leading parishioners, and Wesley's curate, wrote to him against the assembly as a "conventicle." Her reply is full of good sense and womanly feeling. She states that the measure was reclaiming many of the common people from immorality; that it was filling up the parish church; that some who had not attended the latter for years were now seen there. She prays him to relieve her from the responsibility of ending these useful services by assuming it himself, as her husband and pastor. A writer on Methodism justly remarks, that when, in this characteristic letter, she said, "'Do not advise, but command me to desist,' she was bringing to its place a corner-stone of the future Methodism. In this emphatic expression of a deep, compound feeling, a powerful conscientious impulse, and a fixed principle of submission to rightful authority, there was condensed the very law of her son's course, as the founder and legislator of a sect. This equipoise of forces, which, if they act apart, and when not thus balanced, have brought to nothing so many hopeful movements, gave that consistency to Methodism to which it owes its permanence."*

Thus did this truly English and Christian household pursue its course of successful self-culture. For more than forty years it rendered Epworth Rectory a sanctuary of domestic and Christian virtues. Ten of the children attained adult years.† All these became devoted Christians, and every one of them "died in the Lord." "How powerful," remarks their biographer, in ending his almost romantic record, "is a religious education; and how true the saying, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it!'" "Such a family,"

* Isaac Taylor's "Wesley and Methodism," p. 19.

† Southey says six; Moore and Clarke say ten.

he adds, "I have never read of, heard of, or known; nor, since the days of Abraham and Sarah, and Joseph and Mary of Nazareth, has there ever been a family to which the human race has been more indebted."*

Let us not suppose, however, that in this rare picture of Christian household life there were no shadows contrasted with its tranquil lights. It would have been less perfect without them. Samuel Wesley lived in continual conflict with poverty. He was imprisoned for debt, and died in debt. His Epworth living, though nominally valued at £200, afforded but about £130, and his small adjacent parish of Wroote scarcely more than met its own expenses. The economy by which so large a family was so well sustained and educated, is one of the most remarkable facts in its history. Pressed on every side by want, suffering sometimes from severe destitution, as she has recorded in a letter to the Archbishop of York, the admirable matron of the rectory could nevertheless say, when more than fifty years old, that from the best observation she had been able to make, she had learned it was much easier to be contented without riches than with them. Keener sorrows were often added to their poverty. Death followed death until nine children had been borne away from the circle; the marriages of several of the daughters were unfortunate, and the noble mother, in a letter to her brother, writes with the anguish which only a mother can know, for the saddest sorrow of a child: "O sir! O brother! happy, thrice happy are you; happy is my sister that buried your children in infancy, secure from temptation, secure from guilt, secure from want or shame, secure from the loss of friends. Believe me, it is better to mourn ten children dead than one living, and I have buried many."

Twice was the rectory fired at night by the rabble of the parish. In the first instance it was partly consumed; in the second it was totally destroyed, together with its furniture, and the books and manuscripts of the rector. The family barely escaped with their night garments upon them. Mrs. Wesley was in feeble health; unable to climb with the rest through the windows, she was thrice beaten back from the front door by the flames. Committing herself to God, she at last waded through the fire to the street, scorching her face and hands. It was found that one child was missing. The father attempted several times to pass up the stairs to rescue him, but the consuming steps could not bear his weight. He returned in despair, and kneeling

* Clarke's "Wesley Family," vol. ii. p. 386.

down upon the earth, resigned to God the soul of his child. Meanwhile the latter, waking from his sleep, and finding his chamber and bed on fire, flew to the window, beneath which two peasants placed themselves, one on the shoulders of the other, and saved him at the moment the roof fell in and crushed the chamber to the ground.* "Come, neighbours," exclaimed the father, as he received his son, "let us kneel down; let us give thanks unto God; He has given me all my eight children; let the house go, I am rich enough." Hundreds of thousands of devout hearts have since repeated that thanksgiving. A few minutes more and the founder of Methodism would have been lost to the world. In about a quarter of a century the rescued boy went forth from the cloisters of Oxford to Moorfields, to call the neglected masses to repentance, and to begin the great work which has rendered his family historical, not only in his own country, but in all Protestant Christendom.†

CHAPTER III.

JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY.

John Wesley—"Mysterious Noises" at the Rectory—Wesley at the Charterhouse—Charles Wesley—The Duke of Wellington—John Wesley at Oxford—Religious Inquiries—His Mother's Guidance—Thomas à Kempis—Jeremy Taylor—The Witness of the Spirit—Reprobation—William Law—Religious Habits—Scholarship—Religious Anxieties of Charles Wesley—Mysticism—The Holy Club—The Methodists—George Whitefield—Death of the Father of the Wesleys, and Dispersion of the Epworth Family—The Wesleys Embark for Georgia—The Moravians—Failure of the Plans of the Wesleys—Their Errors—Their Return to England.

JOHN WESLEY was born at Epworth, on the 17th of June, 1703, old style. The domestic training which has been described doubtless gave him those habits of method, punctuality, diligence, and piety, which afterwards developed into the system of Methodism itself. His providential escape at the destruction of the Epworth Rectory by fire, in his sixth year, impressed him early with the sense of a special mission in the world; his mother shared the impression, and felt herself called by that event to specially con-

* Letter of Mrs. Wesley: Whitehead's "Life of Wesley," ii. 1.

† Wesley gratefully remembered his escape through life, and had an emblem of a house in flames engraved on one of his portraits, with the motto, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the burning?"

secrate him to God. Two years after it we find her making it the subject of one of her recorded evening meditations. "I do intend," she writes, "to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child, that Thou hast so mercifully provided for, than ever I have been, that I may do my endeavour to instil into his mind the principles of thy true religion and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success."*

Writers on Methodism have been interested in tracing the influence of Wesley's domestic education on the habits of his manhood and the ecclesiastical system which he founded. Even the extraordinary "noises" for which the rectory became noted, and which still remain unexplained, are supposed to have had a providential influence upon his character. These phenomena were strikingly similar to marvels which, in our times, have suddenly spread over most of the civilized world, perplexing the learned, deluding the ignorant, producing a "spiritualistic" literature of hundreds of volumes and periodicals, and resulting in extensive Church organizations.† The learned Priestley obtained the family letters and journals relating to these curious facts, and gave them to the world as the best authenticated and best told story of the kind that was anywhere extant.‡ John Wesley himself has left us a summary of these mysterious events. They began usually with a loud whistling of the wind around the house. Before it came into any room the latches were frequently lifted up, the windows clattered, and whatever iron or brass was about the chamber rung and jarred exceedingly. When it was in any room, let the inmates make what noises they could, as they sometimes did on purpose, its dead hollow note would be clearly heard above them all. The sound very often seemed in the air, in the middle of a room; nor could they exactly imitate it by any contrivance. It seemed to rattle down the pewter, to clap the doors, draw the curtains, and throw the man-servant's shoes up and down. Once it threw open the nursery-door. The mastiff barked violently at it the first day, yet whenever it came after-

* Moore's "Life of Wesley," ii. 1.

† The best account, and perhaps the best solution, of these modern wonders, have been given by Count Gasparin, of Geneva—"Science versus Spiritualism," 2 vols., translated from the French. New York. See also Rogers's "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents." Boston.

‡ "Original Letters of the Rev. John Wesley and his Friends, illustrative of his Early History; with other Curious Papers," etc. By Rev. Joseph Priestley, LL.D., F.R.S. Birmingham. 1791.

wards, he ran whining, or quite silent, to shelter himself behind some of the company. Scarcely any of the family could go from one room into another but the latch of the door they approached was lifted up before they touched it. It was evidently, says Southey, a Jacobite goblin, and seldom suffered Mr. Wesley to pray for the king without disturbing the family. John says it gave "thundering knocks" at the "Amen;" and the loyal rector, waxing angry at the insult, sometimes repeated the prayer with defiance. He was thrice "pushed by it" with no little violence; it never disturbed him, however, till after he had rudely denounced it as a dumb and deaf devil, and challenged it to cease annoying his innocent children, and meet him in his study if it had anything to say. It replied with a "knock, as if it would shiver the boards in pieces," and resented the affront by accepting the challenge. At one time the trencher danced upon the table without anybody's touching either. At another, when several of the daughters were amusing themselves at a game of cards upon one of the beds, the wall seemed to tremble with the noise; they leaped from the bed, and it was raised in the air, as described by Cotton Mather, in the witchcraft of New England. Sometimes moans were heard, as from a person dying; at others, it swept through the halls and along the stairs, with the sound of a person trailing a loose gown on the floor, and the chamber walls, meanwhile, shook with vibrations. It would respond to Mrs. Wesley if she stamped on the floor and bade it answer; and it was more loud and fierce whenever it was attributed to rats or any natural cause.

These noises continued about two months, and occurred the latter part of the time every day. The family soon came to consider them amusing freaks, as they were never attended with any serious harm; they all, nevertheless, deemed them preternatural. Adam Clarke assures us that though they subsided at Epworth, they continued to molest some members of the family for many years. Clarke believed them to be demoniacal; Southey is ambiguous respecting their real character;* Priestley supposed them a trick of the servants or neighbours, but without any other reason than that they seemed not to answer any adequate purpose of a "miracle," to which Southey justly replies, that with regard to the good design which they may be supposed to answer, it would be end sufficient if sometimes one of those unhappy persons who,

* Though Southey avoids any explicit explanation of them in his "Life of Wesley," in a letter to Wilberforce he avows his belief in their preternatural character. See Wilberforce's Correspondence, 2 vols. London.

looking through the dim glass of infidelity, see nothing beyond this life, and the narrow sphere of mortal existence, should, from the well-established truth of one such story, trifling and objectless as it might otherwise appear, be led to a conclusion that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in their philosophy. Isaac Taylor considers them neither "celestial" nor "infernal," but extra-terrestrial, intruding upon our sphere occasionally, as the Arabian locust is sometimes found in Hyde Park.* Of the influence of these facts on Wesley's character, this author remarks that they took effect upon him in such a decisive manner as to lay open his faculty of belief, and create a "right of way" for the supernatural through his mind, so that to the end of his life there was nothing so marvellous that it could not freely pass where these mysteries had passed before it. Whatever may be thought of this very hypothetical suggestion, and of its incompatibility with the disposition of this writer, and, indeed, of most of Wesley's critics, to impute to him a natural and perilous credulity, it cannot be denied that in an age which was characterized by scepticism, a strong susceptibility of faith was a necessary qualification for the work which devolved upon him, and less dangerous by far than the opposite disposition; for though the former might mar that work, the latter must have been fatal to it.

When but thirteen years old, John Wesley left the paternal home for the Charterhouse School, in London. There could hardly be a misgiving of his moral safety in passing out into the world from the thorough and consecrating discipline of the rectory. His scholarship and life at the Charterhouse showed a character already determinate and exalted. He suffered the usual tyranny of the elder students at the Charterhouse, being deprived by them, most of the time, of his daily portion of animal food; but he preserved his health by a wise prescription of his father, that he should run round the garden three times every day. The institution became endeared to him, and on his yearly visits to London he failed not to walk through its cloisters and recall the memories of his studious boyhood—memories which were always sunny to his healthful mind. In 1720 he entered Christchurch College, Oxford, at the age of sixteen.

Meanwhile his brother, and chief coadjutor in founding Methodism, Charles Wesley, had also left Epworth, for Westminster School. Born December 18, 1708, he was the junior of John by more than five years. At Westminster he was under the tuition of his brother, Samuel Wesley, who was usher in the school.

* Wesley and Methodism, pp. 21, 22.

While there an incident occurred which might have changed considerably the history not only of Methodism, but of the British empire. Garret Wesley, of Ireland, who seems not to have been related to the family, proposed to adopt him and settle upon him his estate. The rector of Epworth must have favoured the offer, for money was forwarded yearly from Ireland to London for the expenses of the son. The latter, however, finally declined the proposition of his benefactor, and thus, as his brother John remarked, made "a fair escape" from fortune. Richard Colley, afterwards known as Richard Colley Wesley, was adopted in his stead. This gentleman passed through several public offices, and by the time that the Wesleys were abroad founding Methodism, had entered Parliament. Under George II. he became Baron Mornington. He was the grandfather of the Marquis Wellesley, Governor-General of India, and of the Duke of Wellington, the conqueror of Napoleon.* Had the wish of Garret Wesley been accomplished, the name of the Duke of Wellington, and the hymns of Charles Wesley, might not to-day be known wherever the English language is spoken.

When about eighteen years old, Charles was elected to Christchurch College, Oxford. John had previously left it to become a fellow at Lincoln; the religious seriousness which had grown with his youth, now deepened into a profound anxiety to solve, by his own experience, the questions of personal religion. Healthful in his temperament, and not knowing, as he records in later years, "fifteen minutes of low spirits" during his life, he nevertheless bore, from day to day, the consciousness of a want of harmony with God. Such a harmony, "peace with God," was his ideal of personal religion. Could it not be attained? If attained, could it fail to be a matter of consciousness? Did not the Scriptures teach that "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God?" Was there not also a "Christian perfection" taught in the Scriptures; a "perfect love which casteth out fear?" Not, of course, a perfection according to the absolute moral law of God, but according to the accommodated relation to that law in which our fallen race exists, under the mediatorial economy, and in which unavoidable imperfections are provided for by the atonement, as in the case of unregenerate infancy, without the remorseful sense of guilt. If

* This fact has been questioned by Maxwell, in his Life of the Duke of Wellington. Jackson, however, demonstrates its correctness; Life of Charles Wesley, i. 1. The Duke's name, in the "Army List" of 1800, is the Hon. Arthur Wesley, Lieutenant-Colonel of 33rd Regiment.

these conjectures were correct, what a deplorable condition did Christendom present! How few exemplified essential Christianity! How generally had dogmatism, ecclesiasticism, or, at best, mere ethical principles, overshadowed the spiritual life, and freedom, and beauty of genuine religion! How necessary was it that the Christian world should be recalled from the "tithe of the mint and anise and cummin," to the spiritual life and simplicity of the Gospel, and that he, first settling these questions for himself, should proclaim them, as on the house-tops, to his generation? These were the essential questions of "Methodism," that is to say, of primitive Christianity; and thus, while meditating in the cloisters of Oxford, was he being prepared, by the habitual pressure of such interrogations upon his own conscience, for the great mission which was before him. His vigilant mother, who seems to have been providentially guided, not only to form his character for the origination of Methodism, but to direct him, during her long life, in many of its distinct and most important stages, strengthened, by her letters, the tendencies of his mind at this time. "And now," said she, "in good earnest, resolve to make religion the business of your life; for, after all, that is the one thing that, strictly speaking, is necessary; all things besides are comparatively little to the purposes of life. I heartily wish you would now enter upon a strict examination of yourself, that you may know whether you have a reasonable hope of salvation by Jesus Christ. If you have, the satisfaction of knowing it will abundantly reward your pains; if you have not, you will find a more reasonable occasion for tears than can be met with in any tragedy."*

As usual in the moral discipline of good men, he was to reach the solution of the problems which now absorbed his attention, by inward struggles, the "fiery trial" which purifies. He did not yet apprehend the Scriptural simplicity of faith as the condition of justification, and also of sanctification. He pored over the pages of that marvellous book, *De Imitatione Christi*, which has lent the fragrance of its sanctity to every language of the civilized world, and which, by its peculiar appositeness to almost every aspiration, misgiving, or consolation of devout minds, has seemed more a production of Divine inspiration than any other work in Christian literature, except the Scriptures. It had been a favourite with his father, his "great and old companion." Almost perfect for its design as a monastic manual, its very adaptedness, in this respect, staggered the youthful Wesley, but

* Southey's Wesley, chap. 2. Smith's History of Methodism, i. 3.

it failed not to infect him with its fascinating mysticism. Its impression was deepened by Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying." The rare poetic beauties of this work could not fail to charm his young imagination; but its piety was still more grateful to his present inquiring temper. Taylor's views of simplicity and purity of motive commended themselves to his conscience. Instantly, he says, he resolved to dedicate *all* his life to God, all his thoughts, and words, and actions—being thoroughly convinced there is no medium; that not only a part, but the whole must either be a sacrifice to God or himself, "that is, in effect, to the devil;" a sentiment that characterized his entire remaining life. The more genial light of the "Holy Living" illuminated, though it did not fully explain, the pages of the "Imitation," and both books became his daily companions. His letters show their effect, and his father, perceiving it, endeavoured to confirm it. "God fit you for your great work," he wrote to him; "fast, watch, and pray, believe, love, endure, and be happy, towards which you shall never want the ardent prayers of your most affectionate father." Some of Taylor's opinions provoked the dissent of the devout student, and led him more definitively to doctrines which were to be vital in the theology of Methodism. The bishop, in common with most theologians of his day, denied that the Christian could usually know his acceptance with God. Wesley replied: "If we dwell in Christ and Christ in us, which He will not do unless we are regenerate, certainly we must be sensible of it. If we can never have any certainty of our being in a state of salvation, good reason it is that every moment should be spent, not in joy, but in fear and trembling; and then, undoubtedly, in this life we are of all men most miserable. God deliver us from such a fearful expectation! Humility is, undoubtedly, necessary to salvation; and if all these things are essential to humility, who can be humble, who can be saved? . That we can never be so certain of the pardon of our sins as to be assured they will never rise up against us, I firmly believe. We know that they will infallibly do so, if we apostatize; and I am not satisfied what evidence there can be of our final perseverance, till we have finished our course. But I am persuaded we may know if we are *now* in a state of salvation, since that is expressly promised in the Holy Scriptures to our sincere endeavours, and we are surely able to judge of our own sincerity.*

Here was not only his later doctrine of the "Witness of the Spirit," but a clear dissent from the Calvinistic tenet of "final

* Moore's Wesley, ii., 1, 2.

perseverance." His proclivity to Arminianism became quite decided about this time. "As I understand faith," he wrote, "to be an assent to any truth upon rational grounds, I do not think it possible, without perjury, to swear I believe anything unless I have reasonable grounds for my persuasion. Now that which contradicts reason cannot be said to stand upon reasonable grounds; and such, undoubtedly, is every proposition which is incompatible with the Divine justice or mercy. What, then, shall I say of predestination? If it was inevitably decreed from eternity that a determinate part of mankind should be saved, and none besides, then a vast majority of the world were only born to eternal death, without so much as a possibility of avoiding it. How is this consistent with either the Divine justice or mercy? Is it merciful to ordain a creature to everlasting misery? Is it just to punish a man for crimes which he could not but commit? That God should be the author of sin and injustice, which must, I think, be the consequence of maintaining this opinion, is a contradiction to the clearest ideas we have of the Divine nature and perfections." His mother confirmed him in these views, and expressed her abhorrence of the Calvinistic theology. God's prescience, she argued, is no more the effective cause of the loss of the wicked than our foreknowledge of the rising of to-morrow's sun is the cause of its rising. She prudently advised, however, abstinence from these speculations, as "studies which tended more to confound than to inform the understanding."

The writings of the celebrated William Law had much influence upon him at this stage of his progress. They deepened his mysticism and confirmed his asceticism, leading him to depend upon his own works as the means of purification and comfort, but failing to give him just ideas of the faith "which worketh by love." And precisely here was the critical period of his history, one which must determine whether he should be the ascetic recluse at Oxford, with the "Imitation" ever before him, or the evangelist of his age, on Moorfields, and the Gwennap hills, with the Bible in his hands, *homo unius libri*, a "man of one book." With an earnestness bordering on agony, he writes to his mother, deploring the repugnance toward holiness, which he felt to be natural to him; he sought for humility, but complains that it seemed impossible to him; humility with him, however, meant at this time the ascetic self-abnegation of the "Imitation," a temper which, though it infected him temporarily afterwards, was incompatible with his healthful temperament and with the destined work of his life. He implored his mother's counsels

and prayers, entreating her especially to grant him the Thursday evening, which, according to her method of domestic training, she used to spend in devotional retirement with him.

His removal from Christchurch College to that of Lincoln, enabled him to change his ordinary society. He resolved to make but few acquaintances in his new residence, and none that could not aid his religious progress; and now he began that marvellous diary which so much illustrates his character, his literary opinions, and his unparalleled energy. He received the communion every week; he gave alms to the poor, and his whole life was consecrated to the attainment of the personal "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." Meanwhile he had been admitted to orders, and preached occasionally. He had already attained a high reputation at the university, and was esteemed an excellent critic in the classic languages; his skill in logic was extraordinary; he was elected Greek lecturer and moderator of the classes in a few months after obtaining his fellowship, and when but little more than twenty-three years old. These successes were a part of his providential preparation for the career before him. Six times a week disputations were held at Lincoln College. "I could not," he writes, "avoid acquiring some degree of expertness in arguing, and especially in discerning and pointing out well-covered and plausible fallacies. I have since found abundant reason to praise God for giving me this honest art. By this, when men have hedged me in by what they call demonstrations, I have been many times able to dash them in pieces; in spite of all its covers, to touch the very point where the fallacy lay, and it flew open in a moment." He was called away much of the time to assist his father, who was sinking under years, at Epworth. On one of his occasional visits to Oxford, he found that his brother was passing through the same religious crisis as himself. Charles wrote to him, urging his return to Oxford; he describes himself as mysteriously awakened from the moral lethargy in which he had spent his youth; and attributes the Divine illumination which had been given him to the prayers of his mother. Both seemed to turn instinctively to her, rather than to their father, whenever their hearts were deeply moved by any religious anxiety or difficulty.

John, during his rural retirement at Epworth, had yielded still more to his mystical tendencies under the influence of à Kempis and Law. The turning point which was to fit or unfit him for the task of his life, had not yet been passed. He had desired at one time to try the tranquil life of the Catholic recluses; "it was the decided temper of his soul," he said. Seclu-

sion from the world for at least some months might, he hoped, settle his thoughts and habits. A school in one of the "Yorkshire dales" was proposed. His wiser mother again stepped in to save him for his appointed career, prophetically intimating that God had better work for him to do. He tells us himself, that before his return to the university he travelled some miles to see a "serious man." "Sir," said this person, as if inspired at the right moment, with the right word, for the man of Providence standing before him, "sir, you wish to serve God and go to heaven; remember you cannot serve him alone; you must, therefore, *find* companions, or *make* them; the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion." Wesley never forgot these words. They, perhaps, forecast the history of his life. On reaching Oxford he found "companions" already prepared for him by his brother's agency. The "Holy Club" was now known there, and the epithet of "Methodist" had already been committed to ecclesiastical history. He arrived at Oxford in November, 1729; Charles and his religious associates gathered immediately around him, recognizing at once that capacity for guidance and authority which all who approached him afterwards, seemed spontaneously to acknowledge. Charles was now twenty-one years of age, a Bachelor of Arts, and a college tutor. The "Holy Club," of which he was considered the founder, at first consisted of but four members. Their names are reverently preserved by Methodist writers; they were, "Mr. John Wesley, who was fellow of Lincoln College; his brother Charles, student of Christchurch; Mr. Morgan, commoner of Christchurch, the son of an Irish gentleman; and Mr. Kirkham, of Merton College." They were closely bound together, not only in their religious sympathies, but in their studies, spending three or four evenings each week in reading together the Greek Testament and the ancient classics, and Sunday evening in the study of divinity. They received the Lord's Supper weekly, and fasted twice a-week. A rigid system of self-examination was drawn up for them by Wesley, which, it has been observed, might have been appended to the spiritual exercises of Loyola, had it not mentioned the laws of the Anglican Church. The almost monastic habits of life they were forming, in which, as Wesley's biographers, Coke and Moore, remark, "the darkness of their minds as to Gospel truths is evident," was counteracted by the benevolent and active sympathies of Morgan. He had visited the prison, and brought back reports which induced the little company systematically to instruct the prisoners once or twice a-week. Morgan also came to them from the bed-

side of a sick person of the town, and they were led to adopt a plan for the regular visitation of the sick. Meanwhile their numbers increased. In 1730 several pupils of John, and one of Charles, joined them; in 1732, Ingham, of Queen's College, and Broughton, of Exeter, and about the same time Clayton, of Brazennose, with some of his pupils, and Hervey, the author of "Theron and Aspasia" and the "Meditations," were received. Whitefield joined them in 1735. Before the return of John from Epworth, the term Methodist had been applied to them in jest, by a fellow-student, and Charles was the first of the family who received the now honoured title. It was suggested, doubtless, by their methodical lives; but it had been previously used among religious parties. A hundred years prior to this date, we hear of "the Anabaptists and plain pack-staff Methodists."* A class of Nonconformists, in the days of Annesley, were designated by the epithet, for their views respecting the method of man's justification before God; and a controversial pamphlet of those times discusses the principles of the "New Methodists."† A class of high Calvinistic divines in England, about the time of the Wesleys, also bore the title.

Morgan, whose influence on his companions was so salutary, was of delicate constitution, but of tireless beneficence. He not only visited the sick and prisoners, but collected together the peasant children of the vicinity for religious instruction, and the distribution of good books. His health failed, and he retired to his home in Ireland, where, after a period of mental depression, produced by disease, he died in "great peace and resignation."

Whitefield has left us a characteristic account of his connection with the "Holy Club." He was born in 1714, at Gloucester. He describes his childhood as exceedingly vicious. "If I trace myself," he says, "from my cradle to my manhood, I can see nothing in me but a fitness to be damned; and if the Almighty had not prevented me, by his grace, I had now either been sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death, or condemned, as the due reward of my crimes, to be for ever lifting up my eyes in torments."‡ Yet he alludes to intervals of deep

* Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 2.

† The controversy and the party seem to have been extensive. Dr. Williams, who preached Annesley's funeral sermon, was one of their writers. The questions in dispute were referred to the arbitration of Bishop Stillingfleet. The title of the pamphlet alluded to is, "A War Among the Angels of the Churches, wherein is shown the Principles of the New Methodists in the great Point of Justification; also a Form of Prayer according to those Principles," etc.—Ibid.

‡ Robert Philip's Life and Times of Whitefield, chap. 1.

religious sensibility in his early life. When about fifteen years old he "put on his blue apron and his snuffers," washed mops, cleaned rooms, and became a "common drawer" in the Bell Inn, which was kept by his mother at Bristol. Thomas à Kempis, so important with the Wesleys at Oxford, had fallen into his hands, and could not fail to impress a heart like his, which retained through life the freshness of childhood, and attained with advanced piety the vivid but steady ardour of a seraph. He had already given evidence of his natural powers of eloquence in school declamations, and while in the Bristol Inn composed two or three sermons. Hearing of the possibility of obtaining an education at Oxford, as a servitor or "poor student," he prepared himself and went thither, and afterwards provided for his expenses chiefly by serving his fellow-collegians. His mind had taken a deeply religious turn while yet at Bristol, but à Kempis had not helped him to comprehend the doctrine of Justification by Faith. He says that when he was sixteen years of age, he began to fast twice a-week for thirty-six hours together, prayed many times a-day, received the sacrament every ten days, fasted himself almost to death all the forty days of Lent, during which time he made it a point of duty never to go less than three times a-day to public worship, besides seven times a-day to his private devotions; yet, he adds, "I knew no more that I was to be born again in God, born a new creature in Christ Jesus, than if I was never born at all." He obtained Law's "Serious Call" at Oxford, and that powerful book affected him as it had the Wesleys. He says, that he now began to pray and sing psalms twice every day, besides morning and evening, and to fast every Friday, and to receive the sacrament at a parish church near his college, and at the castle, where the "despised Methodists used to receive it once a-month." The Methodists were not only the common butt of Oxford ridicule, but their fame had spread as far as Bristol before Whitefield left his home. He had "loved them," he tells us, before he entered the university, and now defended them against the sarcasms of his fellow-students. For a year he longed to meet them, but an opportunity seemed not to offer, though he often gazed at them with deep emotions as they passed through a satirical crowd, to receive the Eucharist at St. Mary's.

He procured, at last, an introduction to Charles Wesley, who received him at once to his heart, for they were congenial spirits, being both ardent with vivid natural sympathies; the one a natural poet, the other a natural orator. He was soon introduced to the

Holy Club. "They built me up daily," he says, "in the knowledge and fear of God, and taught me to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Like them he now began to live by rule, to economize the very moments of his time; and whether he ate or drank, or whatsoever he did, to do all to the glory of God. Like them, he received the sacrament every Sunday, at Christchurch, and he joined them in fasting Wednesdays and Fridays. Regular retirement, morning and evening, for meditation and prayer, he says he found at first difficult, if not irksome; but it grew profitable and delightful. He was soon abroad visiting the sick and prisoners, and reading to poor families, for it had become a custom of the Methodist band to spend an hour every day in such acts of usefulness.

The morals of the university were low at this time. Infidelity prevailed, and called forth public remonstrances from the collegiate authorities. What regard was paid to religion was formal and lifeless, and the little company of earnest inquirers looked beyond their circle, in vain, for sympathy and guidance. It is not a matter of wonder, then, that some of them fell into errors. Whitefield, for a time, became a Quietist, and sought repose for his troubled spirit in seclusion from the usual meetings of the club, in walks in the fields, and in praying silently by himself. The Wesleys rescued him, and gave him directions as his "various and pitiable state required." "God gave me," he writes, with his characteristic tenderness of feeling—"God gave me, blessed be His holy name, a teachable temper, and I was delivered from those wiles of Satan."

The scene presented by these young men, thus struggling for self-purification at the greatest seat of English learning, and unconsciously preparing a new development of Protestantism, at a time of general infidelity and demoralization, cannot fail to strike any devout mind as a most impressive spectacle. It was one of those examples of Divine Providence by which the Church, in some of its darkest and most hopeless exigencies, has been endowed with "power from on high," and led forth, as from the wilderness, for renewed triumphs, by means which none had anticipated, and which, notwithstanding their apparent insignificance, have surpassed the wisdom of the wise and the resources of the mighty. Voltaire predicted, about this time, that in the next generation Christianity would be overthrown throughout the civilized world; these young men defeated the prophecy, and rendered the next generation the most effective in Christian history since the days of Martin Luther.

But their preliminary training was not over. The leading agents of the coming revolution were to be cast out upon the world, to prepare themselves, in a larger arena, for the work before them. The father of the Wesleys, approaching his end, and exhorting his sons, meanwhile, to struggle on, had entreated John to become his successor at Epworth, and protect his family from dispersion at his death. The appeal was an affecting one, and the son has been reproached for not heeding it; but he was stedfast in his conviction that a different course of life devolved upon him; and his thoughtful mother seems not to have joined her husband in the attempt to divert him from it. The rector died, the family was scattered, and the Epworth rectory fades from the history of Methodism, to reappear again only when, in later years, its founder, hastening over the realm to call the neglected multitudes to repentance, and denied the pulpit of his father, stood upon his tombstone in the churchyard, and proclaimed his message to the villagers. The disinterestedness of his motives in declining the Epworth living was soon tested. General Oglethorpe, the friend and correspondent of his father, was about to conduct a reinforcement to the colony of Georgia, and the young divine, who had refused a quiet rectory, and the comforts of the parental home, consented to go, accompanied by his brother Charles, as a missionary to the American aborigines. He was to be disappointed in his main design, but was to learn, by the expedition, important lessons for the future. The charm of the mystic writers still hung about him; it was to be dispelled in the remote wilds of America, where it could do little harm, but where his failure to find religious peace contrasted with the practical piety and spiritual enjoyment of a few simple Moravians was to prepare him to return better qualified for the predestined work of his life.

It was still a question whether he ought to desert his widowed mother, who was now dependent upon her children. "I can be," he replied to the invitation, "the staff of her age, her chief support and comfort." His consent depended upon hers; and her reply was what might have been expected from such a woman: "If I had twenty sons, I should rejoice that they were all so employed, though I should never see them again."

On the 14th of October, 1735, the party, consisting of the two Wesleys, and Messrs. Ingham and Delamotte, left London to embark. They found on board the ship one hundred and twenty-four persons, including twenty-six German Moravians, with their bishop, David Nitschman. John Wesley seems immediately,

though informally, to have been recognized as the religious head of the floating community, and his methodical habits prevailed over all around him. The ship became at once a Bethel church and a seminary. The daily course of life among the Methodist party was directed by Wesley: from four till five o'clock in the morning each of them used private prayer; from five till seven they read the Bible together, carefully comparing it with the writings of the earliest Christian ages; at seven they breakfasted; at eight were the public prayers. From nine to twelve Wesley usually studied German, and Delamotte Greek, while Charles Wesley wrote sermons, and Ingham instructed the children. At twelve they met to give an account of what each had done since their last meeting, and of what they designed to do before the next. About one they dined; the time from dinner to four was spent in reading to persons on board, a number of whom each of them had taken in charge. At four were the evening prayers, when either the second lesson of the day was explained—as the first always was in the morning—or the children were catechized and instructed before the congregation. From five to six they again retired for private prayer. From six to seven Wesley read in his state-room to two or three of the passengers, and each of his brethren to a few more in theirs; at seven he joined the Germans in their public service, while Ingham was reading between decks to as many as desired to hear. At eight they met again to exhort and instruct one another. Between nine and ten they went to bed, where, says Wesley, neither the roaring of the sea, nor the motion of the ship, could take away the refreshing sleep which God gave them.*

Here was practical "Methodism" still struggling in its forming process; it was Epworth Rectory and Susanna Wesley's discipline afloat on the Atlantic.

The great event of the voyage, as affecting the history of Methodism, was the illustration of genuine religion which the little band of Moravian passengers gave during a perilous storm. Wesley had observed with deep interest their humble piety in offices of mutual kindness and service, and in patience under occasional maltreatment; but when the storm arose there was an opportunity, he says, of seeing whether they were delivered from the spirit of fear as well as from that of pride, anger, and revenge. In the midst of the psalm with which their service began, the sea broke over the ship, split the mainsail into pieces, and poured in between the decks as if the great deep had already swallowed

* Wesley's Journal, anno 1735.

them up. A terrible alarm and outcry arose among the English, but the Germans calmly sung on. Wesley asked one of them: "Were you not afraid?" "He answered: "I thank God, no." "But were not your women and children?" "No; our women and children are not afraid to die."

Wesley felt that he had not yet so learned Christ, and retired to lay the lesson to heart, and to urge it on the attention of their "crying, trembling English neighbours." On arriving in America, it was again to be pressed upon his awakened mind by a representative of these devoted people. He met Spangenberg, one of their pastors, and consulted him respecting the best plans of ministerial labour.

"My brother," said the Moravian, "I must first ask you one or two questions. Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?"

Wesley was surprised, and knew not what to answer. Spangenberg observed his embarrassment, and asked, "Do you know Jesus Christ?" "I know He is the Saviour of the world," replied Wesley. "True," rejoined the Moravian; "but do you know that He has saved *you?*" "I hope He has died to save me." Spangenberg only added, "Do you know yourself?" "I do," responded Wesley; "but," he writes, "I fear they were mere words."

He was impressed by the simple beauty of the religious life of these Moravians. Delamotte and he lodged with them, and had opportunities, day by day, of observing their whole demeanour; for they were present in one room with them from morning till night, unless for the little time spent in walking for exercise. He describes them as always employed, always cheerful, always cordial to one another; "they had put away all anger, and strife, and wrath, and bitterness, and clamour, and evil-speaking; they walked worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called, and adorned the Gospel of our Lord in all things." His Churchly prejudices were rebuked by the apostolic purity of their ecclesiastical forms. They met, he says, to consult concerning the affairs of their Church; Spangenberg being about to go to Pennsylvania, and Bishop Nitschman to return to Germany. After several hours spent in conference and prayer, they proceeded to the election and ordination of a bishop. The great simplicity as well as solemnity of the proceeding almost made him forget the seventeen hundred years between him and the apostles, and imagine himself in one of those assemblies where form and state were unknown;

but Paul, the tent-maker, or Peter, the fisherman, presided, with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*

It early became manifest that he could not prosecute his designs respecting the Indians, and he continued in Savannah; but his ascetic habits and severe formalism were unsuccessful in reclaiming the demoralized colonists. A similar failure attended his brother at Frederica. They laboured indefatigably, but had yet very imperfect ideas of the "way of salvation by faith." The forms of the Church were enforced with a repetition and rigour which soon tired out the people, and provoked resentments and persecutions. Charles performed four public services every day, enlarging them by an explanation of the morning and evening lessons. John, assisted by Delamotte, formed what serious persons they could find at Savannah into a society, to meet once or twice a-week, in order to reprove, instruct, and exhort one another, and from them selected a smaller number for a more intimate communion. He read the prayers according to the primitive order of his Church, beginning with the morning service at five o'clock, giving a sermon and the communion service at eleven, and the evening service at three. Between eleven and three, when the people were compelled by the heat to remain at home, he visited them from house to house. Following the primitive, but obsolete rubric, he would baptize children only by immersion, and no person was admitted as a sponsor who was not a communicant. He refused to recognize any baptism which was performed by a clergyman who had not received episcopal ordination, and insisted upon rebaptizing such children as had otherwise received that sacrament. His rigour extended even so far as to refuse the Lord's Supper to one of the most devout men of the settlement, who had not been baptized by an episcopally-ordained minister;† and the burial service itself was denied to such as died with what he deemed unorthodox baptism.

Asceticism is usually associated with formalism, for the misled but anxious mind, failing to find comfort in the one, would add other expedients for its relief. Both the brothers denied them-

* Wesley's Journal, anno 1736.

† When he escaped these "orthodox" follies, he referred to them with astonishment. In his journal for September 29, 1749, he gives a letter from John Martin Bolzius, and adds: "What a truly Christian piety and simplicity breathe in these lines! And yet this very man, when I was at Savannah, did I refuse to admit to the Lord's table, because he was not baptized; that is, not baptized by a minister who had been episcopally-ordained. Can any one carry High Church zeal higher than this? And how well have I been since beaten with mine own staff!"

selves not only the luxuries, but many of the ordinary conveniences of life. They slept on the ground rather than on beds; they refused all food but bread and water; and John went barefooted, that he might encourage the poor boys of his school—a condescension better in its motive than in its example. In fine, these Oxford students, misapprehending the simplicity of the Gospel, and the liberty wherewith Christ maketh free, were groping their way, in the New World, through nearly the same deplorable errors which a class of earnest men of the same university have promulgated in our day, with as little success, both as it respects their own spiritual life and the reformation of the Church. They were Puseyites.

Not only their rigorous practices, but their theological opinions defeated them. Faith, not works, as the condition of justification—faith producing works as its necessary fruits; ordinances and sacraments as only aids to faith; the conscious forgiveness of sins; peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; the sanctification, not the abnegation, of the natural affections and appetites, with cheerful thankfulness to Him "who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;" these were conceptions as yet obscure, if not foreign to their minds. How, with the Holy Scriptures in their hands, they could thus err might, indeed, be a mystery to us, were it not that the history of the human mind shows so universally the power of traditional influences, and of even apparently accidental states of opinion, to distort the interpretation of the plainest truth; so that the declaration of a profound and evangelical writer* of our own age may yet prove true, that ideas now admitted by the Christian world to be correct, may yet come to be repelled as intolerable and abominable.

The colonists recoiled from the earnest but erring missionaries. Gossip, backbiting, and scandal, the prevalent vices of small and isolated settlements, beset them at all points; an unfortunate "courtship" which Wesley found it prudent to abandon, occasioned the disaffection of a large family circle; open persecution followed, and an attempt was made to assassinate Charles Wesley. In about a year he returned by way of Boston, where he preached repeatedly in King's Chapel. In some fifteen months more John followed him. They had failed in their designs, but they had learned important lessons. On the sea Wesley wrote that he had bent the bow too far, by making antiquity a co-ordinate rather than a subordinate rule with Scripture; by admitting several doubtful writings; by extending

* Vinet.

antiquity too far; by believing more practices to have been universal in the ancient Church than ever were so; by not considering that the decrees of synods or councils were of but human authority. These considerations insensibly stole upon him, he says, as he grew acquainted with the mystic writers, whose descriptions of union with God and internal religion made everything else appear mean and insipid. "But, in truth," he adds. "they made good works appear so too; yea, and faith itself, and what not? They gave me an entire new view of religion, nothing like any I had before. But, alas! it was nothing like that religion which Christ and his apostles taught. I had a plenary dispensation from all the commands of God; the form was thus: Love is all; all the commands besides are only means of love; you must choose those which you feel are means to you, and use them as long as they are so. Thus were all the bands burst at once; and though I could never fully come into this, nor contentedly omit what God enjoined, yet, I know not how, I fluctuated between obedience and disobedience. I had no heart, no vigour, no zeal in obeying; continually doubting whether I was right or wrong, and never out of perplexities and entanglements. Nor can I at this hour give a distinct account how or when I came a little back toward the right way; only my present sense is this—all the other enemies of Christianity are triflers; the mystics are the most dangerous; they stab it in the vitals, and its most serious professors are most likely to fall by them."

Thus was he breaking away from the mists which had encompassed him; but he had not yet reached those higher acclivities of the religious life, where the problems which had agonized his spirit shine out in clear, serene illumination to the vision of faith. There is an earnestness which is touching in its pathos in an entry of his journal, written as the ship approached the Land's End of England: "I went to America," he says, "to convert the Indians, but oh! who shall convert me? Who, what is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion; I can talk well, nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near; but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled, nor can I say to die is gain. I think verily, if the Gospel be true, I am safe; for I not only have given and do give all my goods to feed the poor—I not only give my body to be burned, drowned, or whatever else God shall appoint for me, but I follow after charity—though not as I ought, yet as I can—if haply I may attain it. I now believe the Gospel is true. I show my faith by my works, by staking my all upon it.

I would do so again and again a thousand times, if the choice were still to make. Whoever sees me, sees I would be a Christian. Therefore are my ways not like other men's ways; therefore I have been, I am, I am content to be, a by-word, a proverb of reproach. But in a storm I think, What if the Gospel be not true? Then thou art of all men most foolish. For what hast thou given thy goods, thy ease, thy friends, thy reputation, thy country, thy life? For what art thou wandering over the face of the earth? a dream? a cunningly-devised fable? Oh! who will deliver me from this fear of death? What shall I do? Where shall I fly from it? Should I fight against it by thinking, or by not thinking of it? A wise man advised me some time since, 'Be still, and go on.' Perhaps this is best; to look upon it as my cross; when it comes to let it humble me, and quicken all my good resolutions, especially that of praying without ceasing; and at other times to take no thought about it, but quietly to go on in the work of the Lord."

On the 1st of February, 1738, he was again in England, and writing in his diary: "This, then, have I learned in the ends of the earth—that I 'am fallen short of the glory of God;' that my whole heart is 'altogether corrupt and abominable,' and, consequently, my whole life—seeing it cannot be that an 'evil tree' should 'bring forth good fruit;' that 'alienated' as I am from 'the life of God,' I am a 'child of wrath,' an heir of hell; that my own works, my own sufferings, my own righteousness, are so far from reconciling me to an offended God, so far from making any atonement for the least of those sins which 'are more in number than the hairs of my head,' that the most specious of them need an atonement of themselves, or they cannot abide his righteous judgment: that 'having the sentence of death' in my heart, and having nothing in or of myself to plead, I have no hope but that of being justified freely, 'through the redemption that is in Jesus;' I have no hope, but that if I seek, I shall find Christ, and 'be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.'" Astonishing and affecting disclosures of the mysterious heart of man! Admonitory lesson to all who would successfully seek the truth, and by it be made free! Here was a man of healthful temperament, of rare intelligence, of logical astuteness, who had read every line of Holy Scripture in the very language in which prophet or apostle had penned it, and yet, with the Bible in his hand, and an anguish of earnestness in his heart, he stumbles before the most important and most simple

truths of revelation. What is the solution of this mystery? Can we suppose that had he read the Scriptures only, and interpreted them as an earnest, unsophisticated peasant would have done, he could so long have failed of their simple faith and inexpressible comfort? These were all he needed; he had reached all other conditions of the Christian life; the faith to appropriate to himself the promises and consolations of the Gospel was still lacking; but could he have failed to discern this fact if he had looked into the Scriptures without the sophistications of other books and the prejudice of traditional errors? His previous references to councils, and Church decrees, and mysticism—his asceticism and ecclesiasticism in Georgia—these explain the mystery. They complicated and rendered nugatory his more direct and simple views of truth. Neither the personal history of Wesley nor the history of Methodism itself, can be comprehended without these revelations of his inward struggles. But the light was dawning, and the morning was at hand. The Moravians were again to meet him in London.

CHAPTER IV.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

Whitefield's Mental Conflicts—His Ascetic Errors—His Conversion—He begins to preach—He preaches in the Metropolis—Remarkable Effects of his Sermons—His Powers as an Orator—He embarks for America—His Return to England.

During the absence of the Wesleys in America, George Whitefield was the presiding spirit of the "Holy Club" at Oxford. He preceded the Wesleys in obtaining the peace of mind, and "assurance of faith," which they had sought together so arduously before they parted. But, like them, he passed through an ordeal of agonizing self-conflicts, in which his sensitive mind became deeply melancholy, and was betrayed into ascetic follies. He was overwhelmed with morbid horrors, and describes himself as losing at times even the power of thinking. His memory failed; his feelings were cramped, he says, as a man bound in iron armour; he selected the poorest food, and the meanest apparel, and by dirty shoes, patched raiment, and coarse gloves, endeavoured to mortify his burdened spirit. He was insulted by his fellow-students, and those who employed his services discharged him, because of his self-negligence. He daily underwent

some contempt at college. Students threw dirt at him in the streets. Whenever he knelt down to pray he felt great pressure both in soul and body, and often prayed under the weight of it till the sweat dripped from his face. "God only knows," he writes, "how many nights I have lain upon my bed groaning under what I felt. Whole days and weeks have I spent in lying prostrate on the ground in silent or vocal prayer." * During the forty days of Lent he ate nothing but "coarse bread and sage tea," except on Saturdays and Sundays. He prayed under the trees at night, trembling with the cold, till the bell of the college called him to his dormitory, where he often spent in tears and supplications the hours which should have brought him the relief of sleep. His health sunk under these rigours; but he writes that, notwithstanding his sickness continued six or seven weeks, he trusted he should have reason to bless God for it through the ages of eternity. For about the end of the seventh week, after having undergone inexpressible trials by night and day, under the spirit of bondage, God was pleased at length to remove the heavy load, to enable him to lay hold on the cross by a living faith, and by giving him the spirit of adoption to seal him, as he humbly hoped, even to the day of everlasting redemption. "But oh!" he continued, "with what joy, joy unspeakable, even joy that was full of glory, was my soul filled, when the weight of sin went off, and an abiding sense of the pardoning love of God, and a full assurance of faith, broke in upon my disconsolate soul! Surely it was the day of my espousals, a day to be had in everlasting remembrance. At first my joys were like a spring-tide, and, as it were, overflowed the banks; go where I would I could not avoid the singing of psalms almost aloud; afterwards they became more settled, and, blessed be God, saving a few casual intervals, have abode and increased in my soul ever since."

Healed in soul and convalescent in body, he visited Bristol for a change of air. He met there the Bishop of Gloucester, who perceived his talents and earnest spirit, and proffered him ordination. He prepared himself for the ceremony by fasting and prayer, and spent two hours the previous evening on his knees in the neighbouring fields. At the ordination he consecrated himself to an apostolic life. "I trust," he writes, "I answered to every question from the bottom of my heart, and heartily prayed that God might say, Amen. And when the bishop laid his hands upon my head, if my vile heart doth not deceive me, I offered up my whole spirit, soul, and body to the

* Philip's Life and Times of Whitefield, chap. i.

service of God's sanctuary. Let come what will, life or death, depth or height, I shall henceforward live like one who, this day, in the presence of men and angels, took the holy sacrament, upon the profession of being inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon me that ministration in the Church. I can call heaven and earth to witness, that when the bishop laid his hand upon me, I gave myself up to be a martyr for Him who hung upon the cross for me. Known unto Him are all future events and contingencies. I have thrown myself blindfold and, I trust, without reserve, into His almighty hands." His remaining life was an exemplification of these vows. He had a soul of fire, and henceforth it glowed brighter and brighter even unto the perfect day.

Fitted by every attribute of his large but simple mind to be an evangelist, but not an ecclesiastical legislator, he now went forth as the Baptist of Methodism, to prepare the way in both hemispheres for the Wesleys and their coadjutors. The good Bishop of Gloucester, who seems to have felt a genial sympathy with his ardent soul, gave him five guineas, "a great supply," wrote Whitefield, "for one who had not a guinea in the world." His first sermon was preached in the church where he had been baptized, and had received his first communion. He revealed at once his extraordinary powers. It was reported to the bishop that fifteen of his hearers had gone mad. The prelate only wished that the madness might not pass away before another Sabbath.

Returning to Oxford he forthwith resumed his "Methodist" labours, comforting his brethren, visiting the sick and prisoners, and encouraging several charity schools which the "Holy Club" had established. He was called to London to preach temporarily at the Tower. There was some scoffing at his first appearance in the pulpit, but his natural eloquence and vivid zeal burst with surprise upon the people, and he passed out amid their blessings, while the query flew from one to another, "Who is he?" For two months he continued to labour in the metropolis, visiting the soldiers in the barracks and hospitals, catechizing children, reading prayers every evening in one chapel, preaching in others, and delivering one sermon a-week at least at Ludgate prison. The people crowded to hear him.

Returning to Oxford he had the pleasure to see the Methodist band increasing, but he was soon away again preaching at Dummer, in Hampshire, where he spent eight hours a-day in reading prayers, catechizing children, and visiting the parishioners. He had received several letters from the Wesleys, in Georgia, calling

him thither. "Do you ask me what you shall have?" wrote John Wesley. "Food to eat, raiment to put on, a house to lay your head in, such as your Lord had not; and a crown of glory that fadeth not away." His heart, he says, leaped within him, and echoed to the call. Hervey, of the Oxford Club, took his place in Hampshire, and he resolved to go again to London to embark. He went first to Bristol to take leave of his friends. While there he preached indefatigably. People of all classes, and all denominations, from Quakers to High Churchmen, flocked to hear him. "The whole city," he wrote, "seemed to be alarmed." The churches were crowded, "the word was sharper than a two-edged sword, and the doctrine of the new birth made its way like lightning into the hearers' consciences." After a short absence he returned to Bristol, and found the excited people, some on foot and some in coaches, coming a mile out of the city to welcome him. They blessed him as he passed along the streets. Though preaching five times a-week, he could not appease the eager crowds. It was difficult for him to make his way through them to the pulpit. Some climbed upon the roof of the church, others hung upon the rails of the organ-loft, and the mass within made the air so hot with their breath, that the steam fell from the pillars like drops of rain. When he preached his farewell sermon, the irrepressible feelings of his hearers broke out into sobs and tears all over the house. They followed him weeping into the street. They kept him busy the next day, from early morning till midnight, in comforting or counselling them, and he had to escape from their importunities, secretly, during the night, for London. While delayed there by his preparations for the voyage, his unexampled eloquence produced a general sensation through the metropolitan churches. When he assisted at the Eucharist, the consecration of the elements had to be twice or thrice repeated. Charitable institutions claimed his services, and larger collections were made than had ever been received by them on similar occasions. Constables were stationed at the doors to restrain the multitude of hearers. Churches were crowded on week-days, and on the autumnal Sunday mornings the streets were thronged before dawn with people, lighting their way by lanterns to hear him.

This transcendent power arose from a combination of qualities, with which he was providentially endowed for the crisis that was approaching in the history of English, and, it is not too much to say, the history of general Protestantism. A great movement was at hand, which needed, among other agencies, powers like

these to usher it in on both sides of the Atlantic, and to awaken the popular sympathies to welcome it—a movement which, it has been said, has immediately, or remotely, so given an impulse to Christian feeling and profession, on all sides, that it has come to present itself as the starting point of our modern religious history.* Wesley was approaching the coast of England while Whitefield was preparing for his embarkation; "and now," says an author who was not over credulous respecting the providential facts of Methodism—"and now, when Whitefield, having excited this powerful sensation in London, had departed for Georgia, to the joy of those who dreaded the excesses of his zeal, no sooner had he left the metropolis than Wesley arrived there, to deepen and widen the impression which Whitefield had made. Had their measures been concerted they could not more entirely have accorded."† In a few days Wesley was proclaiming, in the pulpits of London, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to define the eloquence of Whitefield. It was the utterance of the whole man—heart, head, and person. It was more; it was the "demonstration of the Spirit and of power," the utterance of a living, exulting piety. Just before these scenes in London, while in his native county, he says his spirit would make such sallies that he thought it would escape from the body. At other times he was so overwhelmed with a sense of God's infinite majesty, that he was constrained to throw himself prostrate on the ground, and offer his soul as a blank for the Divine hand to write on it what should please God. One night he describes as a time never to be forgotten. It happened to lighten exceedingly; he had been expounding to many people, and some being afraid to go home, he thought it his duty to accompany them, and improve the occasion to stir them up for the coming of the Son of man. He preached to them warnings and consolations on the highway, while the thunders broke above his head, and the lightnings sped along his path. On his return to the parsonage, while the neighbours were rising from their beds, and terrified to see the lightning run upon the ground, and shine from one part of the heavens unto the other, he and a poor but pious countryman continued in the field, praying, praising, and exulting in God, and longing for the time when Christ shall be revealed from heaven in a flame of fire! "Oh, that my soul," he wrote, "may be in a like flame when he shall actually come to call me!"

* Isaac Taylor's Wesley and Methodism, Preface.

† Southey's Wesley, chap. iv.

How could such a man be other than eloquent? An untutored hearer, returning from one of his sermons, significantly said, "He preached like a lion." But with this moral power he combined most, if not all, other qualifications of a popular orator. He is said to have had a perfect natural grace of manner out of the pulpit, and of gesture in it. Marvels are told about the compass and music of his voice. He was tall in person; his features were regular, and expressive of a generous and buoyant heart; his eyes were blue and luminous, though small, and a slight squint in one of them, caused by the measles, is said not to have "lessened the uncommon sweetness" of his countenance. His humble origin, and occupation in the Bristol Inn, enabled him to understand and address the common people, who, while admiring that natural grace which afterwards rendered him at home in aristocratic circles, felt that he was one from among themselves. He had also an aptitude for illustrations drawn from common life, and a tendency to popular humour, which, without degenerating into vulgarity, drew irresistibly towards him the popular interest; so that Wesley, who was scrupulously, though simply correct, said: "Even the little improprieties, both of his language and manner, were the means of profiting many, who would not have been touched by a more correct discourse, or a more calm and regular manner of proceeding."

His passage to America was long. The ship's company, including, besides the crew, soldiers and emigrants, were mostly an immoral class; but he preached, read prayers, catechized the children, and ministered to the sick, with such zeal, that before they reached Georgia the whole moral aspect of his floating congregation was changed. He remained in the colony only about four months, but during that time travelled and laboured incessantly among its settlements. A brief residence among the Indians, and an unsuccessful attempt to frame a grammar of their language, seem to have satisfied him that his call was not unto them. He found many orphan children among the colonists, and projected an asylum for them, a design which led to his early return to England. He embarked from Charleston, South Carolina, September, 1738, in time, as we shall see, for important events in the incipient history of Methodism.

CHAPTER V.

WESLEY AND THE MORAVIANS.

Wesley's Return from Georgia—His Religious Disquiet—Sketch of the Moravians—Obligations of Methodism to the Martyrs of Constance—Ziska and his Peasant Heroes—Commencement of Herrnhut—Count Zinzendorf—The Moravians in London—Peter Böhler—Conversion of Charles Wesley—Conversion of John Wesley—Wesley's visit to Herrnhut—His Description of it—Theological Views—Obligations of Methodism to the Moravians.

THE ship which bore Whitefield from England, passed in sight of that which bore Wesley back, only a few hours before his arrival at the Downs; but neither of them knew the fact. Whitefield, liberated in spirit, and winged with zeal as with pinions of flame, was flying exultingly on his mission;* but Wesley, who was to be last, and yet, in an important sense, first in the new career they had been forecasting, entered the metropolis, which was still stirred by the evangelical triumphs of his friend, bowed and broken in spirit. In placing his foot again on English soil, he repeats, with profound contrition, the record of his inward struggles: "It is now," he writes, "two years and almost four months since I left my native country, in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity. But what have I learned myself, meantime? Why, what I the least of all suspected, that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God. *I am not mad*, though I thus speak, but I *speak the words of truth and soberness*, if haply, some of those who still dream may awake, and see that as I am so are they." Were they read in philosophy? he continues, with eloquent earnestness, and in language which would cover boastfulness itself with shame; were they read in philosophy? so was he. In ancient or modern tongues? he was also. Were they versed in the science of divinity? he too had studied it many years. Could they talk fluently upon spiritual things? the very same could he do. Were they plenteous in alms? behold, he gave all his goods to feed the poor. Did they give of their labour as well as their substance? he had laboured more abundantly. Were they willing to suffer for their brethren? he had thrown away his friends, reputation, ease, country; he had put his life in his hands,

* The device upon Whitefield's seal was a winged heart, soaring above the globe, and the motto, *Astra petamus*. Southey's Wesley, vol. ii., note 24.

wandering into strange lands; he had given his body to be devoured by the deep, parched up with heat, consumed by toil and weariness, or whatsoever God should please to bring upon him. But, he continues, does all this, be it more or less, it matters not, make him acceptable to God? Does all he ever did, or can, *know*, *say*, *give*, *do*, or *suffer*, justify him in His sight? If the Oracles of God are true, if we are still to abide by the *law and testimony*, all these things, though, when ennobled by faith in Christ, they are holy, and just, and good, yet without it are *dung* and *dross*. He refuses to be comforted by ambiguous hopes. "If," he adds, "it be said that I have faith, for many such things have I heard from many miserable comforters, I answer, so have the devils a *sort* of faith; but still they are strangers to the covenant of promise. The faith I want is a sure trust and confidence in God, that, through the merits of Christ, my sins are forgiven, and I reconciled to the favour of God."*

But the time of his deliverance was at hand. He had learned in anguish its preparatory lessons; his good works, his ascetism, his ritualism had failed him. It had been necessary, perhaps, that he should try them, in order to be a competent guide for the millions who were yet to be affected by his influence. Susanna Wesley had educated him for his great work, and in this respect was the real founder of Methodism, for with a different character he would have had a different history; the germinal principle of Methodism had sprung up at Oxford; but the vital element which was to give it growth and enable it to branch out over the world, was still wanting. It was to be supplied in a manner which forms one of the most extraordinary illustrations of Divine Providence afforded by the annals of the Church.

More than three hundred years had passed since the Council of Constance had sacrificed, at the stake, the two noblest men of Bohemian history, Jerome and Huss. With Wickliffe, they had initiated Protestantism a century before Luther. Though Wickliffe died without the honours of martyrdom, his work was apparently yet not really defeated; and his bones, dug up from the grave and reduced to ashes, were cast on the Severn, and borne by the ocean to the wide world, an emblem, says a Church historian, of the future fate of his opinions. The Papal persecutors representing Europe at Constance, deemed that in destroying Jerome and Huss they had extinguished the new movement on the Continent at least; but "God's thoughts are not as man's thoughts." A spark from the stake of Constance lit up at last the flame of

* Journal, Anno 1738.

Methodism in England, and is extending over the world in our day like fire in stubble.

The princes and prelates had hardly retired from Constance when the people, always truer than the great of the earth in their instinctive appreciation of great truths, rose throughout Bohemia to defend the opinions and avenge the death of their martyred teachers. Armed with flails, they marched victoriously against trained armies, for they were fighting for the right of themselves and of their children to the Word of God and its sacraments. A nobleman of the court, Count Zisca, placed himself at their head, and organizing them into a formidable army, fought against the Emperor Sigismund for the independence of Bohemia. He had lost one eye; the remaining one was destroyed by an arrow in battle about a year after the war began; but, when no longer able to see, he still led his triumphant peasants from victory to victory. Mounting a cask in the camp, the sightless hero prepared them for battle by his eloquent appeals. The emperor invaded Bohemia, but Zisca totally defeated him. The blind commander invaded Austria and Hungary. His victory at Arssig placed the Austrian dominions at his mercy. He founded among his peasant heroes the modern science of fortification; he held at bay the arms of all Germany; he restored the independence of Bohemia, extinguished factions, and achieved eleven victories in pitched battles. Apparently immortal in war, he fell at last by the plague; but ordered, it is said, that his skin should be converted into drum-heads, to be beat in the marches of his soldiers. Eleven years after his death did they maintain the desperate struggle. After memorable scenes of fanaticism and terror on both sides, it was concluded at last by the treaty of Prague, nearly twenty years subsequent to the martyrdom of Jerome and Huss. That treaty conceded the most important religious demands of the Bohemians; but the Papal party afterwards denied them. The Hussites were depressed, persecuted and exiled; and it seemed at times that the movement had been defeated, and that "the blood of the martyrs" could not, in this instance at least, be said to be "the seed of the Church." It is not necessary, in order to vindicate a maxim which has so often been the boast of Christian virtue and suffering, to trace the influence of the Wickliffite and Hussite agitations on the "Great Reformation" a century later. The Bohemian Reformation, though repressed, was not extinguished. It had its own peculiar effect on the world, and has to this day. Many families lingered in Bohemia and Moravia from generation to generation, retaining, in humble

obscurity, the truth for which the Constance martyrs had burned. A half century after their martyrdom the prisons of Bohemia groaned with the sufferings of their faithful followers. Five years later they were again ruthlessly hunted down by persecutions. They were declared outlaws; were expatriated and despoiled of their property. The sick and aged were driven out of their homes, and many perished of cold and hunger. Some expired in dungeons, others were tortured and burned, and the remnant took refuge in the thickest forests, where, fearing discovery during the day, they kindled their fires only by night, and around them spent the hours in watchings, in reading the Scriptures, in mutual exhortations, and in prayer.*

It is a noteworthy fact that these persecuted Bohemians gave the first printed edition of the Bible to the world, and the oldest version in any modern language. They established presses at three different places for the purpose of printing it, and had issued three editions before Luther appeared. They hailed the Reformation under Luther; the terrible "Thirty Years' War" ensued, but failed to secure them liberty of conscience; and they wandered away to other lands to find it. One of them—Christian David, an earnest-minded carpenter—led ten persons of like mind from Schlen, Moravia, to Bertholdsdorf, in Lusatia, a domain of which Count Zinzendorf, a devout young nobleman, was then lord. He was absent, but welcomed them by Heitz, his major-domo; Heitz led the little band to a piece of land, near a mound, the Hutberg or Watch-hill, where Christian David, lifting his axe, cleaved a tree, exclaiming, "Here hath the sparrow found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts." On the 17th of June, 1722, the first tree was cut down: on the 17th of October the exiles entered their new home. The count was still absent, but his pious major-domo wrote him a report of their progress. A phrase in his letter has since given name to the locality, and become a household word, if not a watchword throughout the Protestant world. "May God bless the work according to his loving-kindness," wrote Heitz, "and grant that your excellency may build a city on the Watch-hill [*Hutberg*], which may not only stand under the Lord's guardianship, but where all the inhabitants may stand upon the Watch of the Lord!" [*Herrnhut.*] At the dedication of the building, the good major-domo discoursed to the little company

* "Memorial Days of the Ancient Brethren's Church." The chief source of my data respecting the Bohemian Reformation is Bonnechose's "Reformers before the Reformation." See also Southey's Wesley, chap. 5.

on the words of Isaiah: "I will set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem! which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence, and give him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

Thus arose *Herrnhut*—Watch of the Lord—and the Moravian Brotherhood, a religious community whose name is as "ointment poured forth," whose missions have been the admiration of all good men, and who, in our day, have the extraordinary distinction of enrolling the majority of their communicants on their lists of reclaimed pagans.

Zinzendorf, accompanied by his young wife, visited the domain some few months later, and seeing from the highway the new home of the exiles in the forest, descended from his carriage, and hastily entering it, fell upon his knees amid the group of grateful inmates, and "blessed the place with a warm heart." He had secured Roth, a diligent pastor, for his tenants at Bertholdsdorf, and his friend, the pastor Schaefer, had said at the introduction of Roth: "God will place a light upon these hills which will illuminate the whole country; of this I am assured by a living faith." The count shared this faith, and sacrificing the honours and prospects of his rank, devoted himself thenceforth to Christian labours. His friend, the Baron de Watteville, joined him; the lady Joanna de Zetzschwitz subsequently took thither a number of young women for education, and founded the famous Economy of Girls at Herrnhut, and the forest sanctuary now became the home of hundreds, not only of the remnants of the old Bohemian Protestants, but of devout men from many parts of Europe.

The government grew jealous of the new establishment, and the count was exiled, and saved his estates only by securing them to his wife. Disguised by the name of De Freydek, one of his real but least known titles, he travelled in Germany, and became a private tutor in the family of a merchant till he could prepare himself for an examination for ordination. He succeeded, and began to preach, and journeyed as an evangelist in Sweden, Holland, Switzerland, and England. Meanwhile, under his patronage, missionaries were passing out from Herrnhut to various parts of the world. He visited in their behalf the West Indies, New York, and Pennsylvania. Returning to revisit his Herrnhut people, he was imprisoned, was rebanished, and resumed his religious travels in various parts of Europe. Finally he found shelter again among his devoted Herrnhuters, and died at the age of sixty, amid the tears and prayers of "nearly a hundred brethren

and sisters who were assembled in the room where he lay and the adjoining apartments."* A few hours before his departure he said to those around him: "We are together like angels; and as if we were in heaven." "Did you suppose," he asked, "in the beginning, that the Saviour would do as much as we now really see, in the various Moravian settlements, among the children of God of other denominations, and among the heathen? I only entreated of Him a few first-fruits of the latter, but there are now thousands of them."

The "Reformers before the Reformation" had not then laboured in vain. The Bohemian sufferers at Constance had verified the maxim so often consecrated by the tears and thanksgivings of the faithful, that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." There gleam to-day on the darkest skies of the Pagan world reflections of light from the martyr fires of Constance; and Herrnhut, "the Watch of the Lord," has become a watch-light to the world. From this people—so remarkable and fruitful in their history—was Methodism not only to copy much of its internal discipline, but to receive the impulse which was yet necessary to start it on its appointed route. Wesley had already learned much from them. In their resignation amid the storms of the Atlantic, he had seen a piety which he possessed not himself. On his landing in Georgia, the doctrine of the "Witness of the Spirit," which had dawned upon his mind from the Scriptures, while reading Jeremy Taylor at Oxford, was brought home to his conscience by the appeal of Spangenberg. His unavailing asceticism had been rebuked there by their more cheerful practical piety; his unsuccessful, because defective, preaching, by their more evangelical and more useful labours; and his rigid ecclesiasticism by the apostolic simplicity of their Church councils. And now, hardly had he landed in England from Georgia when witnesses for the truth, from Herrnhut, met him again with the appeal: "This is the way, walk ye in it."

They had established or revived several small assemblies in London and elsewhere. One of their preachers, Peter Böhler, a name which will ever be memorable to Methodists, had just arrived in the city. Wesley first met him on February 7, 1738, about a week after his own arrival—"a day much to be remembered," he writes. "From this time," he adds, "I did not willingly lose an opportunity of conversing with him."† He again records that

* Spangenberg's "Life of Zinzendorf," translated by Samuel Jackson. London. 1838.

† Wesley's Journal, anno 1738.

"by Böhler, in the hand of the great God, I was convinced of unbelief, of the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved." At a later date he says that he was amazed more and more by the accounts which Böhler gave of the fruits of living faith—the holiness and happiness which he affirmed to attend it. Wesley began the Greek Testament anew, resolving to abide by the law and the testimony, and being confident that it would show him whether this doctrine was of God. On the first day of the following April, we read in his journal, "being at Mr. Fox's society my heart was so full that I could not confine myself to the forms of prayer which we were accustomed to use there. *Neither do I propose to be confined to them any more,* but to pray indifferently, with a form or without, as may be suitable to particular occasions." He began to see "the promise," he says, "but it was afar off." Again he records that he met Peter Böhler once more, and had now no objection to what the Moravian said on the nature of faith; namely, that it is—to use the words of the Anglican Church—"a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God." Neither could he deny the happiness nor holiness which Böhler described as fruits of this living faith. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," and, "He that believeth hath the witness in himself," were texts which fully convinced him of the former, as "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin," and, "Whosoever believeth is born of God," did of the latter. He was staggered, however, for a time, at the Moravian doctrine of an instantaneous change of heart. Desponding under a sense of guilt, he subsequently adds: "Yet I hear a voice—and is it not the voice of God?—saying, 'Believe, and thou shalt be saved. He that believeth is passed from death unto life. God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Oh, let no one deceive us by vain words, as if we had already attained this faith—that is, the proper Christian faith. By its fruits we shall know. Do we already feel 'peace with God,' and 'joy in the Holy Ghost?' Does 'His Spirit bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God?' Alas, with mine He does not! Oh then, Saviour of men, save us from trusting in anything but Thee! Draw us after Thee! Let us be emptied of ourselves, and then fill us with peace and joy in believing, and let nothing separate us from Thy love, in time or in eternity."

The indefatigable Böhler and his humble associates had

already been guiding Charles Wesley into "the way of salvation by faith;" and as Charles was the first of the brothers who received the name of Methodist, so was he the first to learn by experience the saving truth which Methodism was destined to witness to the world. He had conversed with Zinzendorf, and had been in one of the small Moravian assemblies, where, he says, "I thought myself in a choir of angels."* He was entertained during a period of sickness at the house of a pious mechanic, by the name of Bray, who was an attendant of the London "Societies," and who, he says, is "now to supply Peter Böhler's place," as the latter had left England. This devoted artizan read the Scriptures to him, and was able, from his own experimental knowledge of them, to direct his troubled mind. "God sent," he says, "Mr. Bray, a poor ignorant mechanic, who knows nothing but Christ; yet, by knowing Him, knows and discerns all things." A Christian woman of the family conversed with him on the nature of faith. "Has God bestowed faith on you?" he asked. "Yes, He has." "Why, have you peace with God?" "Yes, perfect peace." "And do you love Christ above all things?" "I do, above all things incomparably." "Then, are you willing to die?" "I am, and would be glad to die this moment; for I know all my sins are blotted out; the handwriting that was against me is taken out of the way, and nailed to the cross. He has saved me by His death. He has washed me by His blood. He has hid me in His wounds. I have peace in Him, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Her answers to the most searching questions he could ask were so full, that he had no doubt of her having received the atonement, and waited for it himself with a more assured hope.

On May 21, 1738, he inserts a remarkable passage in his journal: "I waked in hope and expectation of his coming. At night my brother and some friends came and sang a hymn to the Holy Ghost. My comfort and hope were hereby increased. In about half an hour they went. I betook myself to prayer, the substance as follows: O Jesus, thou hast said, *I will come unto you.* Thou hast said, *I will send the Comforter unto you.* Thou hast said, *My Father and I will come unto you, and make our abode with you.* Thou art God, who canst

* Jackson's "Life of Charles Wesley," chap. iv. I cannot too strongly commend this work. It has been our best *history* of Methodism. It is to be regretted that the American edition omits many of its best specimens of Charles Wesley's poetry. The English edition is a mosaic set with the gems of his genius.

not lie. I wholly rely upon thy most true promise. Accomplish it in thy time and manner." Having thus prayed he was composing himself to sleep in quietness and peace, when he heard some one say, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise, and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thy infirmities." The words were so appropriate to his state of mind that they "struck him to the heart." He said within himself, "Oh that Christ would but speak thus to me!" and lay "musing and trembling for some time." Then ringing the bell for an attendant, he sent to ascertain who had uttered the words, feeling in the meantime "a strange palpitation of heart," and saying, yet fearing to say, I believe! I believe! The devout woman who had before given him so positive a testimony respecting the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, came to him, and said, "It was I, a weak, sinful creature, that spoke; but the words were Christ's. He commanded me to say them, and so constrained me that I could not forbear." He sent for his pious host, and asked him whether it would be right for him to dare to presume that he now had Faith? Bray answered, that he ought not to doubt of it; it was Christ that spoke to him; he knew it, and wished them to pray together. "But first," said he, "I will read what I have casually opened upon: 'Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.'" "Still," says Wesley, "I felt a violent opposition and reluctance to believe; yet still the Spirit of God strove with my own and the evil spirit, till, by degrees, he chased away the darkness of my unbelief. I found myself convinced, I knew not how nor when, and immediately fell to intercession. I now found myself at peace with God, and rejoiced in hope of loving Christ. My temper was for the rest of the day mistrust of my own great but unknown weakness. I saw that by faith I stood, and the continual support of faith kept me from falling, though of myself I am ever sinking into sin. I went to bed still sensible of my own weakness; I humbly hope to be more and more so, yet confident of Christ's protection."

Three days after Charles had thus attained "rest to his soul," John also found it. He records that he continued to seek it, though with strange indifference, dulness, and coldness, and unusually frequent relapses into sin, till Wednesday, May 24. About five o'clock on the morning of that day he opened his Testament on these words: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of

the divine nature" (2 Peter i. 4). Just as he went out he opened it again on the passage, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." In the evening he went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where a layman was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans; about a quarter before nine, while listening to Luther's description of the change which the Spirit works in the heart through faith in Christ, "I felt," writes Wesley, "my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, 'This cannot be faith, for where is thy joy?' Then was I taught that peace and victory over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of our salvation; but that, as to the transports of joy which usually attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them, according to the counsels of His own will. After my return home I was much buffeted with temptations, but cried out and they fled away. They returned again and again; I as often lifted up my eyes, and He sent me help from His holy place. And herein I found the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving, yea, fighting, with all my might under the law as well as under grace. But *then* I was sometimes, if not often, conquered; *now* I was always conqueror." Thus had the feet of both the brothers been directed into the path of life by the instrumentality of the London Moravians.

Wesley's mother, who was residing in London, was still his guide and counsellor. He read to her a paper recording his late religious experience. She strongly approved it, and said "she heartily blessed God, who had brought him to so just a way of thinking."* Thus, in the thirty-fifth year of his age, after twenty-five years, as he elsewhere informs us,† of religious solicitude and struggles, did he, by a clearer apprehension of the doctrine of justification by faith, find rest to his soul, and feel himself at last authorized to preach that blessing to all contrite men, from his own experimental proof of its reality. But had he not faith before? Doubtless he had; at another time he declared that he had, but that it was "the faith of a servant" rather than "of a child." The animadversions of Southey and

* Compare his Journal, June 8, 1738, with June 13, 1739. These references effectually correct Southey's misrepresentations of her opinion on the subject.

† Smith's "History of Methodism," ii. 1.

Coleridge on his present experience are conclusively met by the direct question whether that experience was in accordance with the Scriptures or not. Was his previous state of inward struggle and desolation, or his present one of settled trust and peace, most in harmony with the Scriptural description of a regenerated soul, which has "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," having "not received the spirit of bondage unto fear, but the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father?" Any further question than this on the subject is not one of Christian experience, but of Christianity itself.

The interest which these and previous events had given him for the Moravians, induced him to visit Herrnhut. In about a fortnight he set out on the journey, accompanied by his friend Ingham, and six others. At Marienborn they met Zinzendorf, who had organized there a brotherhood of about fifty disciples from various countries. "I continually met," says Wesley, "with what I sought for, living proofs of the power of faith; persons saved from inward as well as outward sin, by the love of God shed abroad in their hearts; and from all doubt and fear, by the abiding witness of the Holy Ghost given unto them." He sums up the views which Zinzendorf gave him concerning justification, as follows: 1. Justification is the forgiveness of sins. 2. The moment a man flies to Christ he is justified. 3. And has peace with God, but not always joy. 4. Nor, perhaps, may he know he is justified till long after. 5. For the assurance of it is distinct from justification. 6. But others may know he is justified by his power over sin, by his seriousness, by his love of the brethren, and his "hunger and thirst after righteousness," which alone prove the spiritual life to be begun. 7. To be justified is the same thing as to be born of God. ("Not so," interpolates Wesley.) 8. When a man is awakened he is begotten of God, and his fear and sorrow, and sense of the wrath of God, are the pangs of the new birth.

He passed to Herrnhut, which he reached August 1, 1738. He describes it as lying in Upper Lusatia, on the border of Bohemia, and containing about a hundred houses, built on a rising ground, with evergreen woods on two sides, gardens and cornfields on the others, and high hills in the background. It had one long street, through which the great road from Zittau to Lobau extended. Fronting the middle of this street was the orphan-house, in the lower part of which was the apothecaries' shop; in the upper the chapel, capable of containing six or seven hundred people. Another row of houses ran, at a small distance,

from the orphan-house, which accordingly divided the rest of the town, besides the long street, into two squares. At the east end of it was the Count's house, a small, plain building like the rest, having a large garden behind it, which was well laid out, not for show but for the use of the community. Wesley spent there about a fortnight. He found at Herrnhut defects, doubtless, but his best expectations were surpassed. "God," he says, "has given me at length the desire of my heart. I am with a Church whose conversation is in heaven, in whom is the mind that was in Christ, and who walk as He walked. As they have all one Lord and one faith, so they are all partakers of one spirit, the spirit of meekness and love, which uniformly and continually animates all their conversation. Oh how high and holy a thing Christianity is, and how widely distant from that which is so called, though it neither purifies the heart nor renews the life, after the image of our blessed Redeemer." He heard there with admiration, Christian David, who had cleaved with his axe the first tree for the mansion of the colony. Of justification this Christian mechanic said: "The right foundation is not your contrition—though that is not your own, not your righteousness, nothing of your own, nothing that is wrought in you by the Holy Ghost; but it is something without you, the righteousness and the blood of Christ. For this is the word: 'To him that believeth on God, that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.' This, then, do if you would lay a right foundation. Go straight to Christ with all your ungodliness; tell him, 'Thou whose eyes are as a flame of fire, searching my heart, seest that I am ungodly: I plead nothing else. I do not say I am humble or contrite, but I am ungodly; therefore bring me to Him that justifieth the ungodly. Let Thy blood be the propitiation for me.' Here is a mystery, here the wise men of the world are lost; it is foolishness unto them."

He was struck by the peculiarity of almost everything about this Christian community. Some of its customs were questionable, but most appeared to him peculiar only in the sense of being thoroughly Christian. Even what might be called their recreations were religious. He saw, with agreeable surprise, all the young men march round the town in the evening, "as is their custom," singing praise with instruments of music, and gathering into a circle on a neighbouring hill to join in prayer. Returning with resounding songs, they concluded the evening, and made their mutual adieus by commending one another to God in the great square. He was affected by their simple burial rites. Their grave-

yard was "God's Acre." They bore thither the dead with hymns. Little children led the procession, and carried the bier of a deceased child. He saw a bereaved father, a humble mechanic, looking upon the grave of his infant, and wishing to console him, found it unnecessary, for he had a high Comforter. Wesley inquired respecting his affliction. "Praised be the Lord," was the parent's reply; "praised be the Lord, he has taken the soul of my child to himself; I know that when his body is raised again, both he and I shall be ever with the Lord."

"I would gladly," says Wesley, "have spent my life here, but my Master calling me to labour in other parts of His vineyard, I was constrained to take my leave of this happy place." He returned as he came, on foot, bearing with him lessons which were to be available in all his subsequent career.

Methodism owes to Moravianism special obligations. First, it introduced Wesley into that regenerated spiritual life, the supremacy of which over all ecclesiasticism and dogmatism, it was the appointed mission of Methodism to reassert and promote in the Protestant world. Second, Wesley derived from it some of his clearest conceptions of the theological ideas which he was to propagate as essentially related to this spiritual life; and he now returned from Herrnhut not only confirmed in his new religious experience, but in these most important doctrinal views. Third, Zinzendorf's communities were based upon Spener's plan of reforming the Established Churches by forming "little Churches within them,"* in despair of maintaining spiritual life among them otherwise; Wesley thus organized Methodism within the Anglican Church. And, fourth, not only in this general analogy, but in many details of his discipline can we trace the influence of Moravianism.

He reached England in September, 1738. After these providential preparations, he was ready to begin his great career, though as yet without a distinct anticipation of its historical importance.

* Spangenberg's "Life of Zinzendorf."

BOOK II.

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF METHODISM. 1739—1744.

CHAPTER I.

THE WESLEYS AND WHITEFIELD ITINERATING.

Wesley returns from Germany—Charles Wesley—Religious "Societies" in London—Wesley takes Refuge in them when Expelled from the Churches—He Preaches to the Prisoners at Newgate—His Tenacity for Church Order—Whitefield arrives—He is denied the City Pulpits—He goes to Bristol—Is excluded from the Pulpits there—Preaches in the Open Air at Kingswood—Wesley at Bristol—He begins to preach in the Open Air—Vast Congregations—Whitefield's Departure—Scenes at Kingswood—Methodism in Wales—Griffith Jones—Howell Harris—Whitefield in Moorfields—Extraordinary Effects of his Preaching—Wesley's Labours—He encounters Beau Nash at Bath—The First Methodist Chapel—Wesley in Moorfields—Marvellous Effects on his Hearers—Examples—Charles Wesley threatened with Excommunication—He preaches in Moorfields—The Foundry opened for Worship—Separation from the Moravians—Epoch of Methodism.

While Wesley was returning to England on the German Ocean, Whitefield was also returning on the Atlantic. They were about to meet, to lay permanently, though unconsciously, the foundations of Methodism.

Charles Wesley had been preaching with increased zeal during his brother's absence. Several clergymen had embraced his improved views, and converts were multiplied daily by his labours. When he preached, the houses were generally crowded with eager hearers, but church after church was closed against him. He had taken charge of the curacy of Islington, but was ejected from it, not so much because of his doctrine, as for the earnestness with which he uttered it. He frequented Newgate, and ministered to the convicts; and his fervid spirit rejoiced in the simple but lively devotions of the small assemblies which the Moravians had revived in London. These societies were formed in 1667, under the

labours of two London clergymen, Horneck and Smithies, and the auspices of Bishop Hopkins, during a period of extraordinary religious interest. More than thirty years later, Dr. Woodward published an account of them. He reports that there were, in his day, forty in London and its neighbourhood, besides several in the country, and nine in Ireland. They seem to have had no other affiliation than a common purpose and the ties of a more intimate religious sympathy than the formal means of grace in the Established Church afforded. They became active in Christian philanthropy, and originated, it is said, no less than twenty associations for the suppression of vice and the relief of suffering, some of which grew into sufficient importance to command the interest of several bishops, and of the queen of William III.* They had latterly much declined, but the visits of the Moravians to London renewed a few of them. They seemed a providential preparation for the approaching development of Methodism; for when the Wesleys were expelled from the pulpits of the Establishment, they found refuge and audiences in these humble assemblies, and they afforded at last the nucleus and form of the more thoroughly organized Methodist "Societies" in several parts of the kingdom.

When Wesley reached the metropolis, on returning from Germany, he flew to them as to an asylum. He arrived on Saturday night. The next day "I began," he says, "to declare in my own country the glad tidings of salvation, preaching three times, and afterward expounding to a large company in the Minories. On Monday I rejoiced to meet our little society, which now consisted of thirty-two persons. The next day I went to the condemned felons in Newgate, and offered them a free salvation. In the evening I went to a society in Bear Yard, and preached repentance and remission of sins. The next evening I spoke the truth in love at a society in Aldersgate Street; some contradicted at first, but not long; so that nothing but love appeared at our parting. Thursday, 21st, I went to a society in Gutter Lane, but I could not declare the mighty works of God there, as I did afterwards at the Savoy, with all simplicity, and the word did not return empty. On Saturday, 23rd, I was enabled to speak strong words both at Newgate and at Mr. E.'s society, and the next day at St. Anne's, and twice at St. John's, Clerkenwell, so that I fear they will bear with me there no longer.†

* Mary, not Anne, as Smith says, *History of Methodism*, book ii., c. ap. 2. Philip's *Life of Whitefield*, chap. 4.

† Journal, September 17, 1738.

Thus he entered upon the great career of his life, for these incessant labours were no consequence of a febrile or temporary zeal; they are an example of what was thereafter to be almost his daily habit till he fell, in his eighty-eighth year, at the head of more than a hundred and fifty thousand followers, and five hundred and fifty itinerant preachers, who were stimulated by his unabated zeal to similar labours in both hemispheres. And now those marvellous "Journals," which have afforded so much inspiration to the devout, so much matter of criticism to the learned, and of astonishment and scorn to the sceptical, open before us a new book of wonders, calm themselves, but hurrying us along, year after year, with an almost feverish excitement. He began by "expounding," nearly every day, in the London "Societies." On Sundays he preached in the churches, but at the end of almost every sermon he records it to be the last time; not that his manner was clamorous, or in any way eccentric; nor that his doctrine was heretical, for it was clearly that of the Homilies and other standards of the Church; but it was brought out too forcibly, and presented too vividly, for the state of religious life around him. He went from the closed pulpits not only to the "Societies," but to the prisons and the hospitals, where his message was received with gratitude and tears, and was attended with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. "Friday, November 3, 1738," he writes, "I preached at St. Antholin's; Sunday, five in the morning, at St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate; in the afternoon at Islington; and in the evening to such a congregation as I never saw before, at St. Clement's in the Strand. As this was the first time of my preaching here, I suppose it is to be the last. On Wednesday my brother and I went, at their earnest desire, to do the last good office to the condemned malefactors." He describes the scene at their execution as the most affecting instance he ever saw of faith triumphing over sin and death. Observing the tears running down the cheeks of one of the criminals, while his eyes were steadily fixed upward, a few moments before he died, Wesley asked, "How do you feel now?" He calmly replied: "I feel a peace which I could not have believed to be possible; and I know it is the peace of God which passeth all understanding." His brother made use of the occasion to declare the Gospel of peace to a large assembly of publicans and sinners. "O Lord God of my fathers," exclaimed Wesley, "accept even me among them, and cast me not out from among Thy children." In the evening he was preaching at Basingshaw church, and the next morning at St. Antholin's.

The Wesleys were still tenacious of "Church order;" they had done nothing, nor did they yet intend to do anything, which was contrary to that order. They had consultations with the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury, and were found by these prelates to be even too rigid in some of their ecclesiastical opinions. The former approved their doctrine of assurance as explained in his presence, but had to reprove them for their readiness to rebaptize Dissenters. The latter gave them sensible advice. "Keep," he said, "to the doctrines of the Church; avoid all exceptionable phrases; preach and expound only the essentials of religion; other things, time and the providence of God only can cure."

Denied the city pulpits, the brothers went not only to the "Societies" and prisons, but to and fro in the country, preaching almost daily. Whitefield was needed to lead them into more thorough and more necessary "irregularities." He arrived in London, December 8, 1738. Wesley hastened to greet him, and on the 12th, "God gave us," he writes, "once more to take sweet counsel together." The mighty preacher who had stirred the whole metropolis a year before, now met the same treatment as his Oxford friends. In three days five churches were denied him. Good, however, was to come out of this evil. He also had recourse now to the "Societies," and his ardent soul caught new zeal from their simple devotions as from his new trials. Wesley describes a scene at one of these assemblies, which reminds us of the preparatory Pentecostal baptism of fire, by which the Apostles were "endued with power from on high," for their mission. He says, January 1, 1739, that Messrs. Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, and his brother Charles were present with him at a love-feast in Fetter Lane, with about sixty of their brethren. About three in the morning, as they were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon them, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as they had recovered a little from the awe and amazement which the presence of the Divine Majesty had inspired, they broke out with one voice, "We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord." Whitefield exclaims, "It was a Pentecostal season, indeed." And he adds, respecting these "Society meetings," that "sometimes whole nights were spent in prayer. Often have we been filled as with new wine, and often have I seen them overwhelmed with the Divine Presence, and cry out, 'Will God, indeed, dwell with men upon earth? How dreadful is this place! This is no other than the house of

God, and the gate of heaven!"* In this manner did the three evangelists begin together the memorable year which was afterwards to be recognized as the epoch of Methodism. On the 5th, Whitefield records an occasion which foreshadowed the future. A "conference" was held at Islington with seven ministers, "despised Methodists," concerning many things of importance. They continued in fasting and prayer till three o'clock, and then parted "*with a full conviction that God was about to do great things among us.*"†

Whitefield wished to take collections for his projected orphan-house, but the churches were soon generally closed against him; only two or three still remained at his command for a few days. Preaching in one of them with "great freedom of heart and clearness of voice," while nearly a thousand people stood outside the edifice, and hundreds had gone away for want of room, he was struck with the thought of proclaiming the word, as Christ did, in the open air. He mentioned it to some friends, who looked upon it as a fanatical notion. "However," he writes, "we knelt down and prayed that nothing may be done rashly. Hear and answer, O Lord, for Thy name's sake."

He went to Bristol, his native city, which had formerly received him with enthusiasm. The churches were open to him at his arrival, but in a fortnight every door was shut, except that of Newgate prison; and this, also, was soon after closed against him by the authority of the Mayor. Not far from Bristol lies Kingswood, a place which has since become noted in the history of Methodism. It was formerly a royal chase, but its forests had mostly fallen, and it was now a region of coal mines, and inhabited by a population which is described as lawless and brutal, worse than heathens, and differing as much from the people of the surrounding country in dialect as in appearance.‡ There was no church among them, and none nearer than the suburbs of Bristol, three or four miles distant. Whitefield found here an unquestionable justification of field preaching, and on Saturday, February 17, 1739, he crossed the Rubicon, and virtually led the incipient Methodism across it, by the extraordinary irregularity of preaching in the open air. Standing upon a mount, he proclaimed the truth to about two hundred degraded and astonished colliers. He took courage from the reflection that he was imitating the example of Christ, who had a mountain for his pulpit, and the

* Gillies's Life of Whitefield, chap. 4, note.
† Philip's Life and Times of Whitefield, chap. 4.
‡ Southey's Wesley, chap. 6.

heavens for a sounding-board; and who, when his Gospel was refused by the Jews, sent his servants into the highways and hedges. "Blessed be God," he writes, "that the ice is now broke, and I have now taken the field. Some may censure me, but is there not a cause? Pulpits are denied, and the poor colliers are ready to perish for lack of knowledge."

He repeated his labours at Kingswood with continually increasing hearers; two thousand were present at his second sermon; from four to five thousand at his third; and they rapidly grew to ten, fourteen, and twenty thousand. His marvellous powers found their full play in this new arena, and his poetic spirit felt the grandeur of the scene and its surroundings. He speaks of the sun shining very brightly, and the people standing in such "an awful manner around the mount," and in such profound silence, as to fill him with a "holy admiration." The trees and hedges were full. All was hushed when he began; and he preached for an hour with great power, and so distinctly that all could hear him. "Blessed be God," he writes, "Mr. —— spoke rightly; the fire is kindled in the country." To behold such crowds standing together in solemn silence, and to hear the echo of their singing resounding over the mighty mass, suggested to him the scene of the general assembly of the spirits of just men made perfect, when they shall join in singing the song of Moses and the Lamb in heaven! The moral effect of these occasions still more deeply impressed him. Having no righteousness of their own to renounce, the poor colliers were glad to hear that Christ was a friend to publicans, and came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He could see the effect of his words by the white gutters made by the tears which trickled down their blackened cheeks, for they came unwashed out of the coal-pits to hear him. Hundreds after hundreds of them were brought under deep religious impressions, which, as the event proved, happily ended in sound and thorough conversions. The change was soon visible to all observers. As the scene was quite new, and Whitefield had just begun to preach extempore, it often, he says, occasioned him inward conflicts. Sometimes, when twenty thousand people were before him, he had not, in his own apprehension, a word to say either to God or to them. "But," he continues, "I was never totally deserted, and frequently (for to deny it would be lying against God) so assisted that I knew by happy experience what our Lord meant by saying, 'Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'" The open firmament above him, the prospect of the adjacent fields,

with the sight of thousands beyond thousands, some in coaches, some on horseback, and some in the trees, and at times "all affected and drenched in tears together," presented a scene which was sublime and at times overpowering to his vivid imagination, especially when the grand picture was impressed with the solemnity of the approaching evening. "It was then," he writes, "almost too much for, and quite overcame me."*

He soon began to preach boldly on a large bowling-green in Bristol, and as thousands flocked to the novel scene, he wrote to Wesley to come to his aid. Wesley arrived on Saturday evening, April 31, 1739. He could hardly reconcile himself at first, he says, "to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday, having been all my life, till very lately, so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done in a church." The next evening, Whitefield being gone, he began expounding to a small "Society" the Sermon on the Mount; "one pretty remarkable precedent," he writes, "of field-preaching, though I suppose there were churches at that time also." Monday, 2nd of May, at four in the afternoon, he "submitted to be more vile," he says, and proclaimed in the open air the glad tidings of salvation, from a little eminence in a ground adjoining the city, to about three thousand people. His text befitted the occasion: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." In a few days more he was standing on the top of Hannam Mount, in Kingswood, proclaiming, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, . . yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price;" and in the afternoon he again stood up amid five thousand, and cried, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." He too had now crossed the Rubicon, and all who knew him knew that with him there could be no retreat.

Driven out of the churches, the new evangelists had evidently taken possession of the people. Whitefield committed his out-door congregations to Wesley, and left for other fields. The multitude sobbed aloud at his farewells; crowds gathered at his door when he departed, and twenty accompanied him out of the city on horseback. His exit was hardly less triumphant than at

* Gillies's Whitefield, chap. 4.

his former visit, notwithstanding his different treatment from the clergy and authorities. As he passed through Kingswood the grateful colliers stopped him; they had prepared an "entertainment" for him, and offered subscriptions for a charity school to be established among them. He was surprised at their lavish liberality; and laying, at their urgent request, a corner-stone for the building, knelt down on the ground among them, and prayed that the gates of hell might not prevail against it, to which their rough voices responded a hearty "Amen." Breaking away from them at last, he passed into Wales.

Religion and morals had sunk as low in the Principality, during this century, as in other parts of the country. A contemporary witness* represents that spiritual darkness hung over the land. The morals of both high and low were generally corrupt; drunkenness, gluttony, and licentiousness being everywhere prevalent. Saturday night was spent, usually to the dawn of the Sabbath, in the *Nosweithian Cann*, or song-singing to the harp, accompanied with dancing; and Sunday afternoon at the *Achwaren-Gamp*, athletic sports and rustic dances, which drew together the population of towns and villages; while the *Bobl gerdded*, or walking people, a vagabond class, infested the country, living by beggary. The church, meanwhile, is represented as almost totally inert, and "nothing would appear more improbable than that Methodism could find proselytes" among a people so thoughtless, reckless, and profligate. Many Papal superstitions still lingered among the peasantry, and Wesley, at his first visit, said, "they were as little versed in the principles of Christianity as a Creek or Cherokee Indian," a condition which Methodism was destined totally to revolutionize.

The moral desolation of the country induced Griffith Jones, who, though he lived and died a clergyman of the Establishment, became noted as a Methodist, to attempt some extraordinary means for its improvement. He established the Welsh "circulating schools," an itinerant system of religious education, conducted by an organized corps of instructors, who were distributed over the country to teach the common people to read the Scriptures in Welsh, and to instruct them in the catechism and in psalmody. They passed from one district to another, pausing sufficiently in each to teach such persons as they found willing to

* See "An Account of Religion in Wales about the Middle of the Eighteenth Century." Philip's Whitefield, chap. 6. It was taken from the mouth of a very old Welsh Methodist, and published in 1799, in the *Trysorva*, edited by Rev. Thomas Charles, of Bala.

receive them, and revisiting them for the same purpose at intervals. This novel scheme was soon extended over the whole country. Jones was meanwhile the most indefatigable preacher in Wales; and while the Wesleys and Whitefield were beginning their extraordinary labours in England, he was making preaching tours, and extending his itinerant schools, through a large portion of the Principality. He sometimes preached from tombstones, and on the green sward, for the churches could not accommodate the people. About the time of Whitefield's visit, one hundred and twenty-eight of his schools were in operation; and they had been established in almost every parish when their venerable founder died, in 1761. Though a faithful Churchman, the impulse which he gave to religion in Wales resuscitated and greatly promoted evangelical Dissent. His teachers became the earliest native Methodist preachers; and their travels as instructors, as also his own preaching tours, opened the way for the Methodist itinerancy. He co-operated afterwards with Wesley and Whitefield, met in their Conferences in London, and is entitled to be considered one of the Methodist founders.

The name of Howell Harris is as dear to evangelical Welshmen as that of Griffith Jones. He was born at Trevecca, in 1714. In 1735 he went to Oxford to study for the Church, but disgust at the infidelity and immorality which prevailed there, drove him away. Returning to Wales, he began to exhort the neglected poor in their cottages, and was so successful that in a few months he formed several societies among them, thus affording another of those providential coincidences which mark the religious history of the times. Thirty of these organizations were sustained by him at the time of Whitefield's arrival, and in three years more they numbered three hundred. He lived and died a Churchman, but received little sympathy from the Established clergy, and, until the visits of Whitefield and the Wesleys, pursued his evangelical labours almost alone, apparently without anticipating that they would result in a wide-spread Dissent. In 1715 there were only thirty Dissenting chapels in the Principality, and in 1736 only six in all North Wales;* in 1810 they numbered nearly a thousand; they have since increased to more than two thousand.†

* Philip's Life and Times of Whitefield, chap. vi.

† According to the official statistics of the British Government for 1857, they were about 2300. Over one million, or nearly the whole Welsh population, now attend public worship some part of the day every Sabbath. There is now a church, National or Dissenting, to nearly every three square miles

Harris was a lay preacher; he applied repeatedly for ordination, but was denied it by the bishops on account of his irregular modes of labour. Whitefield passed from Kingswood to Cardiff, and there saw him for the first time. Their souls met and blended like two flames, and "set the whole Principality in a blaze."* For three years had the laborious layman travelled, and preached twice nearly every day. Seven counties had he gone over, calling the people to repentance, addressing them in fields, from tables, walls, or hillocks. "He is full of the Holy Ghost," wrote Whitefield; "blessed be God, there seems a noble spirit gone out into Wales." And he expresses himself as not doubting that Satan envied the happiness of their first meeting, and as believing that they should make his kingdom shake throughout the Principality. They held public meetings immediately in Cardiff, preaching amid weeping crowds within and a scoffing rabble without.

The next day they were at Newport, where Whitefield addressed a large assembly. He found, he said, Wales well prepared for the Gospel; new schools were opening every day, on the plan of Griffith Jones, and the people readily came twenty miles to hear a sermon. Husk, Pontypool, Abergavenny, Carlean, and Treleck were rapidly visited. In some instances the churches were opened to him, and when they could not accommodate the crowd he preached a second sermon in the open air. All the way, he says, he could think of nothing so much as of Joshua, going from city to city and subduing the devoted nations. Mobs threatened him, but he hesitated not. At Treleck, being denied the church, he stood upon a horseblock before the inn and delivered his message. At Carlean, Harris had been assailed by the rabble, who beat a drum and huzzaed around him. Whitefield considered it to be a challenge which he himself ought to accept. He stood up amid "many thousands," but "God suffered them not to move a tongue." He preached with unusual power, and "was carried out beyond himself." Harris followed the English discourses of Whitefield with exhortations in Welsh. They were congenial spirits, and their co-operation gave an impulse to the religious spirit of Wales which has not only been felt down to our day, but promises to be perpetual.

of Wales. (Article by Rev. J. G. Evans, in *New York Observer*, May 1, 1858.) Methodism, which, as we shall hereafter see, made but slight impression on Scotland, has elevated the popular religious condition of Wales above that of Scotland.

* Philip's Whitefield, chap. vi.

Returning to England, Whitefield traversed a large portion of the country, preaching at bowling-greens, market-crosses, and on the highways. After thus preparing the way for the Wesleys, by arousing the popular attention of the rural districts, he went to London, where, while opening the services at Islington church, he was silenced by a churchwarden, but stood upon a tomb in the churchyard, and proclaimed the truth to the willing people.

Excluded from all the churches, he resolved to preach at Moorfields on the next Sunday. His friends admonished him of danger from the rabble which frequented that noted resort; two of them, however, had courage enough to accompany him. Arm in arm, they pushed their way through the multitude; but he was separated from his companions by the pressure, and borne along through a lane which the mob formed for him to the centre of the fields. A table placed there for his pulpit was broken to pieces; he was then pressed to a wall, mounting which he preached to the swarming thousands with such effect that they were soon tamed down to the quiet and decorum of a church. "The word of the Lord," he writes, "runs and is glorified; people's hearts seem quite broken; God strengthens me exceedingly; I preach till I sweat through and through."

He went the same evening to Kennington Common, and addressed a vast multitude. These labours he continued with increasing interest. Scores of carriages, hundreds of horsemen, and thirty or forty thousand on foot, thronged around him.* Their singing could be heard two miles off, and his own voice a mile. Waggons and scaffolds were hired to the throng that they might the better hear and see the wonderful preacher, who, consecrated and gowned as a clergyman of the national hierarchy, had broken away from its rigid decorum, and, like his Divine Master, had come out into the highways and hedges to save their neglected souls. The genuine popular heart recognized him as a true apostle; and in the collections, made after these field sermons, for his Orphan Asylum, the poor people gave their halfpence so liberally that he was wearied down in receiving them, and a single man could not carry the amount home for him. He records a contribution, of which nearly one-half consisted of but little short of ten thousand pieces of copper. After the collection had been taken, the crowd gathered around his carriage throwing their mites into the windows. Such are the people at heart, whatever their voices and fists may declare in the mob.

* He gives one estimate of nearly sixty thousand in Moorfields. Philip's Life, etc., chap. iv.

Wesley, meantime, was greatly successful at Bristol, where he had formed "Bands;" and at Kingswood, where the school, begun by Whitefield, was rising under his care. He made excursions, also, to other towns, and his journals afford, on almost every page, examples of incredible labours. Astonishing effects began to attend his word. While preaching at Newgate, Bristol, on the words, "He that believeth hath everlasting life," he was led, without any previous design, to declare strongly and explicitly that God willeth "all men to be thus saved," and to pray that if this were the truth of God, he would "bear witness to His word." Immediately one, and another, and another, sank to the earth; "they dropped on every side as thunderstruck." And the next day he records "that all Newgate rang with the cries of those whom the Word of God cut to the heart."* His own spirit grew mighty in the consciousness of the moral power he was now wielding by the Word of God. On one occasion, he says, his soul was so enlarged he thought he could have cried out, in another sense than Archimedes, "Give me where to stand and I will shake the earth." The same day he stood amid hundreds of people on Rose Green, and taking for his text, "The God of glory thundereth," etc., preached to them in a storm of lightning and rain, which could not disperse them from his magical presence.

In one of his excursions to Bath, about this time, he encountered the noted Beau Nash, the presiding genius of its gaieties. The incident is interesting, as being the first of those public interruptions of his ministry which were soon to degenerate into mobs, and agitate most of England and Ireland. The fashionable pretender hoped to confound the preacher and amuse the town, but was confounded himself. Wesley says there was great public expectation of what was to be done, and he was entreated not to preach, for serious consequences might happen. The report gained him a large audience, among whom were many of the rich and fashionable. He addressed himself pointedly to high and low, rich and poor. Many of them seemed to be surprised, and were sinking fast into seriousness, when their champion appeared, and, coming close to the preacher, asked by what authority he did these things? "By the authority of Jesus Christ, conveyed to me by the now Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid hands upon me and said, Take thou authority to preach the Gospel," was the reply. "This is contrary to act of parliament; this is a conventicle," rejoined Nash. "Sir," said Wesley, "the conventicles mentioned in that act, as the preamble shows, are seditious meetings;

* Journal, Anno 1739.

but this is not such; here is no shadow of sedition; therefore it is not contrary to that act." "I say it is," replied Nash; "and, besides, your preaching frightens people out of their wits." "Sir, asked Wesley, "did you ever hear me preach?" "No." "How, then, can you judge of what you never heard?" "Sir, by common report." "Common report is not enough; give me leave, sir, to ask, is not your name Nash?" "My name is Nash." "Sir," continued Wesley, "I dare not judge of *you* by common report." The irony was too pertinent to fail of effect. Nash paused awhile, but, having recovered himself, said, "I desire to know what these people come here for?" One of "the people" replied, "Sir, leave him to me; let an old woman answer him: you, Mr. Nash, take care of your body; we take care of our souls, and for the food of our souls we come here." His courage quailed before the sense and wit of the common people, and, without another word, he retreated in haste. As Wesley returned the street was full of people hurrying to and fro, and speaking emphatic words. But when any of them asked, "Which is he?" and he replied, "I am he," they were awed into silent respect.

He had already undesignedly become an "Itinerant." His ordinary employment in public, he says, was now as follows: every morning he read prayers and preached at Newgate; every evening expounded a portion of Scripture to one or more of the societies. On Monday, in the afternoon, he preached abroad, near Bristol; on Tuesday at Bath and Two-mile Hill, alternately; on Wednesday, at Baptist Mills; every other Thursday, near Peneford; every other Friday, in another part of Kingswood; on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning, in the Bowling Green (which lies near the middle of Bristol); on Sunday, at eleven, near Hannam Mount; at two, at Clifton; and at five, on Rose Green; and "hitherto," he adds, "as my days, so my strength hath been."

His societies in Bristol grew so rapidly that he was compelled to erect a place of worship for their accommodation; and thus was another step taken forward in the independent career upon which he was being unconsciously led by the providence of God. On the 12th of May, 1739, the corner-stone "was laid with the voice of praise and thanksgiving." This was the first Methodist chapel in the world. He had not the least design of being personally engaged either in the expense or the direction of the work, having appointed "eleven feoffees," on whom he supposed the burden would fall; but, becoming involved in its entire financial responsibility, he was constrained to change this arrangement.

And as to the direction of the undertaking, he says he presently received letters from his friends in London, Whitefield in particular (backed with a message by a person just from the metropolis), that neither he nor they would have anything to do with the building, nor contribute anything towards it, unless he would instantly discharge all feoffees and do everything in his own name. Many reasons they gave for this course; but one was decisive with him—namely, that such feoffees always would have it in their power to control him, and, if he preached not as they liked, to turn him out of the house he had built. He accordingly yielded to their advice, and, calling all the feoffees together, cancelled, without opposition, the instrument made before, and took the whole management into his own hands. Money, he says, it is true, he had not, nor any human prospect of procuring it; but he knew "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," and in His name set out, nothing doubting. In this manner was it that the property of all his chapels became vested solely in himself during the early part of his career, a responsibility which was necessary in his peculiar circumstances, which he never abused, and which he transferred, in prospect of his death, by a "deed of declaration," to his Legal Conference. Decisions in the Court of Chancery, made under this document, have given security to the property, and stability to the whole economy of Wesleyan Methodism down to our day.

Charles Wesley was labouring, meantime, incessantly in many parts of London, and Ingham in Yorkshire. Whitefield lingered in London, as if detained to thrust out Wesley before the multitudes there. Wesley arrived from Bristol, and the next day accompanied him to Blackheath, to hear him preach. Between twelve and fourteen thousand people were present. Whitefield urged him to address them; he recoiled, but at last consented, and thus became known as a field-preacher in the metropolis. Whitefield felt that he himself had done a good work that day. He says: "I went to bed rejoicing that another fresh inroad was made into Satan's territories, by Mr. Wesley following me in field-preaching in London as well as in Bristol."

After accompanying Wesley to Bristol, Kingswood, and Gloucester, and visiting other places as a field-preacher, Whitefield embarked again for America August 14, 1739. He had a work of preparation to do there also, for, in a few years, Wesley's itinerants were to follow on his track.

Most English religious writers of our day, who have treated of these events, have come to acknowledge the utility, if not the

necessity, of the irregular labours of Whitefield and the Wesleys in the condition of the Church and of the degraded masses of their time, for the beneficial results are inscribed on all the land and on much of the world; but they have not been equally liberal in explaining the marvellous phenomena which attended zealous evangelists, and which surprised them as much as their enemies. It was impossible that such extraordinary exertions should not be accompanied by extraordinary excitement, and it was, perhaps, equally impossible that the extraordinary excitement should not occasion correspondent physical effects. Some of these effects have already been mentioned. The most singular fact about them is, that for a considerable time the superior ardour and eloquence of Whitefield did not produce them, while, under the calmer and more logical preaching of Wesley, people dropped on every side as if thunderstruck. It is also noteworthy that, from the date of his return from Germany down to this time, not one of his texts, as recorded in his journals, was of a severe or terrific character, but they were, as in most of his life, selected from the "great and precious promises," or related to the nature and means of personal religion. Yet under such preaching did hardened, as well as sensitive hearers, fall around him like men shot in battle. While preaching on the Common, at Bristol, from the words, "When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both," a young woman sank down in violent agony, as did five or six persons at another meeting in the evening. Many were greatly offended by their cries. The same offence was given during the day by one at "Theaner's Hall," and by eight or nine others at "Gloucester Lane." One of these was a young lady, whose mother was irritated at the scandal, as she called it, of her daughter's conduct; but "the mother was the next who dropped down and lost her senses in a moment, yet went home with her daughter full of joy, as did most of those who had been in pain." Such "phenomena" increased continually. Bold blasphemers were instantly seized with agony, and cried aloud for the divine mercy, and scores were sometimes strewed on the ground at once, insensible as dead men. A traveller at one time was passing, but on pausing a moment to hear the preacher was directly smitten to the earth, and lay there apparently without life. A Quaker, who was admonishing the bystanders against these strange scenes as affectation and hypocrisy, was himself struck down, as by an unseen hand, while the words of reproach were yet upon his lips. A weaver, a great disliker of Dissenters, fearing that the new excitement would

alienate his neighbours from the Church, went about zealously among them to prove that it was the work of Satan, and would endanger their souls. A new convert lent him one of Wesley's sermons; while reading it at home he suddenly turned pale, fell to the floor, and roared so mightily that the people ran into the house from the streets, and found him sweating, weeping, and screaming in anguish. He recovered his self-possession, and arose rejoicing in God. On one occasion great numbers fell around the preacher, while he was inviting them to "enter into the Holiest by a new and living way." A woman opposed them as giving way to an agitation which they might control, and endeavoured to escape from the assembly. Scarcely had she got three or four yards when she fell down in as violent agony as the rest.

Not until July, 1739, when Whitefield was again with Wesley, did any such phenomena attend his own preaching. "Saturday, 9th," says Wesley, "I had an opportunity to talk with him of those outward signs which had so often accompanied the inward work of God. I found his objections were chiefly grounded on gross misrepresentations of matter of fact. But the next day he had an opportunity of informing himself better, for no sooner had he begun to invite all sinners to believe in Christ than four persons sank down close to him, almost at the same moment. One of them lay without either sense or motion. The third had strong convulsions all over his body, but made no noise unless by groans. The fourth, equally convulsed, called upon God with strong cries and tears. From this time I trust we shall all suffer God to carry on his own work in the way that pleaseth Him."

These marvels were not peculiar to Methodism; they had occurred in "Religious Revivals" from the Reformation down to this time. Edwards recorded them as common under his ministry in New England.* Gillies shows them to have been frequent in Scotland and other sections of the Church.† They have occurred in our day, with even an epidemic prevalence, in many parts of America. Charles Wesley discountenanced them. John considered them at first with favour, as proofs of the power of the truth, but afterward discouraged them. Most Methodists

* See his Treatise on the Religious Affections, and his Narrative of the New England Revival.

† Gillies's Historical Collections; see also Watson's Observations on Southey's Life of Wesley. Isaac Taylor's solution of these affections is quite apologetic, but perhaps equally fantastic: Wesley and Methodism.

agree with Watson, "that in no such cases does the occasional occurrence of noise and disorder prove that an extraordinary work in the hearts of men was not then carrying on by the Spirit of God, that by the exercise of a firm discipline, then most of all to be exerted, they are to be as far as possible repressed, for the power of the work does not lie in them; and that yet discipline, though firm, ought to be discriminating, for the sake of the real blessing with which, at such seasons, God is crowning the administration of His truth." They will come under our consideration more fully hereafter.

The new movement had now advanced too far for a retreat, and had acquired too much energy to stand still; it must go forward with increasing "irregularities" and isolation from the Church. Charles Wesley was cited to Lambeth, and threatened by the Archbishop with excommunication; for while his brother was preaching in the open air at Bristol, and Whitefield in Moorfields, he had followed their example in Essex, at Thaxted, and other places. He was somewhat intimidated by the menace; but Whitefield, whose agency seems to have been always opportune throughout this stage of Methodism, was at hand for his rescue, and exhorted him to take his stand openly in Moorfields the following Sunday. He did so, preaching there to ten thousand hearers. He preached elsewhere in the afternoon, and still later on the same day, "to multitudes upon multitudes," at Kennington Common. At night he sought consolation at the Moravian Society, in Fetter Lane. He, too, was now fully committed to the "irregularities" of the new movement.

Apparently adverse events hastened its development. Peter Böhler had formed the constitution of the Fetter Lane Society. Wesley, though virtually recognized as its guide, had not interfered with its regulations. But dangerous errors were creeping into it: some of its members denounced the institution of the Christian ministry, and some all religious ordinances; others became Antinomians, and Quietism prevailed among them. Some of the customs and hymns introduced by the Moravians were exceptionable. Molther, a Moravian recently from Germany, promoted these errors with unwearied enthusiasm, and inculcated "True stillness" as a substitute for external means of grace. Wesley hastened to London, and found, he says, "every day the dreadful effects of our brethren's reasoning and disputing with each other. Scarcely one in ten retained his first love, and most of the rest were in the utmost confusion, biting and devouring one another." He entreated them to stand in the old

paths, and no longer to subvert one another by idle controversies and strife of words. He left them apparently reconciled, and Molther acceded to his counsels; but scarcely had he returned to Bristol before information reached him of new troubles. Again he visited and admonished them, but was not successful. On Sunday, July 20, 1740, he read to the society his objections, and being resisted, took final leave of it. He was followed by about a score of its members, to whom nearly fifty were soon after added, comprising most of the female "Bands." "We gathered up," says Charles Wesley, "our wreck *rari nantes in gurgite vasto*, floating here and there on the vast abyss, for nine out of ten were swallowed up in the dead sea of stillness. Oh, why was not this done six months ago? How fatal was our delay and false moderation!"

Attempts were made by the Moravians for a reunion. Peter Böhler arrived soon after the separation; Wesley revered him more, perhaps, than he did any other man then living, but, as his objections applied not so much to the Moravians in general as to local evils among them in England, and these could not be remedied, he could not follow the counsels of his old friend. "I marvel," he says, "how I refrain from joining these men; I scarce ever see any of them but my heart burns within me; I long to be with them, and yet I am kept from them." Spangenberg,* his friend in Georgia, and finally Zinzendorf himself, came to London to repair the division; but it was irreparable, and it is well, perhaps, that it was so. Time allayed the irritations of both parties. Each had its peculiar mission in the world; each has since cordially recognized the other; but had it not been for this temporary disturbance, Wesley and his associates might have been merged in the Moravian body,† and assuredly not with the advantages which have resulted to the world from the distinct organization of Methodism.

* Latrobe, in a note to Spangenberg's Life of Zinzendorf, examines the Moravian difficulties in London very candidly, in reply to Whitefield's charges. They seem to have been temporary errors, and not chargeable to the Church elsewhere. Wesley, however, believed, with Whitefield, that they were inherent in the Moravian system, and he attacked them often afterwards. Zinzendorf was certainly inclined to defend them. I take, however, with pleasure, Latrobe's explanations.

† At a later period Charles Wesley was deterred from joining the Moravians, and adopting their English Quietism, only by the strenuous remonstrances of his brother and Lady Huntingdon. Jackson attempts to disprove the fact, but Smith successfully corrects him. Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 8: Smith's Hist. of Methodism, book ii. chap. 2.

Wesley had previously secured the Foundry in Moorfields, a building which the Government had used for the casting of cannon, but which was deserted and dilapidated. At the invitation of two strangers he preached in it, and at their instance, and by their assistance, opened it for regular public worship on the 11th day of November, 1739, some eight months before his separation from the Fetter Lane Society. This date has been considered the epoch of Methodism, for thenceforward the Foundry was its head-quarters in London. In his "Church History," Wesley assigns it other dates, as the formation of the "Holy Club," at Oxford, in 1729; and the meeting of himself and others, by the advice of Peter Böhler, in Fetter Lane, May 1, 1738; but in his introduction to the "General Rules of the Society," he says: "In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London and desired that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come; this was the rise of the UNITED SOCIETY." "This," he tells us, "was soon after the consecration of the Foundry." Twelve came the first night, forty the next, and soon after a hundred.* Though he continued in fraternal relations with the Moravians till the separation of July 20, 1740, the society formed the preceding year was organized and controlled by himself, and has continued in unbroken succession down to our day. The date of its origin was celebrated with centenary solemnities by all the Methodist communities of the world in 1839.† It was signalized not only by the organization of the Society, and by the opening of the Foundry for worship, but by the erection at Bristol of the first Methodist chapel, by the organization of "Bands" in that city, and by the publication by the Wesleys of their "Hymns and Sacred Poems," the beginning of that Methodistic psalmody which has since been of inestimable service to the denomination wherever it has extended.‡

* Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley, chap. 7.

† Dr. Smith (History of Wesleyan Methodism, book ii., chap. 2) argues in favour of the date of the separation from the Moravians in 1740. His reasons do not, however, justify such a deviation from the acknowledged opinion of all Methodist bodies throughout the world. There can hardly be a dispute respecting the real epoch of Methodism. The same affirmation cannot be made, however, respecting the locality of its origin. "Bands" were formed by Wesley, and the "New Room," or chapel, was commenced at Bristol, some months before the opening of the Foundry and the formation of the "Society" in London. Myles (Chronological History of the Methodists, chap. 1) says: "The first preaching-house was *built* in Bristol; the first which was *opened* was in London." The italics are his own.

‡ At their return from Georgia they published a similar work, but it was

The purely accidental, or, rather, providential manner in which Methodism had reached this stage of its progress, is too obvious to need much remark. Excluded from the churches, and with "Bands" of converted men in London, Bristol, and Kingswood under his care, Wesley was compelled to provide places for their assemblies, and regulations for their government. He did so only as the necessity was thrust upon him, not knowing what result would follow. Neither at this period, nor indeed at any subsequent time, did he think of deviating from the National Church. It was the practical and summary philosophy of his life to do the duty nearest to him, assured that all others would come in their due order. His least partial biographer has justly said, that whither his plans at this time were to lead he knew not, nor what consistence the societies he was collecting would take, nor where he was to find labourers as he enlarged his operations, nor how the scheme was to derive its financial support. But these considerations troubled him not. God, he believed, had appointed it, and God would always provide means for accomplishing His own ends.* English Methodist writers have deemed it desirable to defend him against imputations of disregard for the authority and "order" of the National Church. The task is not difficult, as will be seen in the course of our narrative; but it may hereafter be a more difficult one to defend him, before the rest of the Christian world, for having been so deferential to a hierarchy whose moral condition at the time he so much denounced, and whose studied policy throughout the rest of his life was to disown, if not to defeat him.

less adapted to public use. The two volumes issued in 1739 spread rapidly among the new "Societies." Two editions were issued during the first year; they introduced that popular church music which has ever since been characteristic of Methodism, and one of the most potent means of its success.

* Southey's Life of Wesley, chap. 9.

CHAPTER II.

THE WESLEYS ITINERATING IN ENGLAND; WHITEFIELD ITINERATING IN AMERICA.

Susanna Wesley—Her Counsels and Encouragements to her Son—Beginning of the Lay Ministry—David Taylor—Mobs—Charles Wesley itinerating—Is Mobbed in Wales—Whitefield itinerating in America—Effects of his Preaching in Philadelphia—Princeton College—His Reception in Boston—His Triumphant Passage through the Colonies.

During these important events Susanna Wesley was providentially still at hand, though in extreme age, to counsel and encourage her son. She had approved his field-preaching, and accompanied him to Kennington Common, where she stood by his side amid twenty thousand people.* Her son Samuel Wesley, with whom she had resided at Westminster since the dispersion of the family from Epworth, remonstrated against her sanction of the irregular labours of his brothers; but she saw the overruling hand of God in the inevitable circumstances which compelled them to their extraordinary course. A consultation was held in her presence respecting their separation from the Fetter Lane Society, and she approved that necessary measure. She had been led, about this time, by a clearer faith, to sympathize more fully than ever with their new views of the spiritual life. John Wesley records a conversation with her on the subject, in which she remarked that till lately she had rarely heard of the present conscious forgiveness of sins, or the witness of the Spirit, much less that it was the common privilege of all true believers. "Therefore," she said, "I never durst ask for it myself. But two or three weeks ago, while my son Hall, in delivering the cup to me, was pronouncing these words: 'The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee,' they struck through my heart, and I knew that God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven *me* all *my* sins." Wesley asked whether her father (Dr. Annesley) had not the same faith, and if she had not heard him preach it to others. She answered, he had it himself, and declared, a little before his death, that for more than forty years he had no darkness, no fear, no doubt at all of his being "accepted in the Beloved;" but that, nevertheless, she did not remember to have heard him preach even once explicitly upon it; whence she supposed he also looked

* Wesley's Journal, Anno 1739.

upon it as the peculiar blessing of a few, and not as promised to all the people of God.*

Doubtless she had enjoyed before this time a genuine Christian experience; her writings incontestably prove this; her misgivings related to the degree of confidence which attends a true faith. The doctrine of assurance, or the witness of the Spirit, as Wesley called it, had always been admitted by the Puritan divines of both Old and New England; but, as she remarked, it had not been considered the privilege of all true believers. It was a logical consequence of the Calvinistic theology, that it should be assurance of eternal as well as of present salvation, and the perilous liabilities of such an inference rendered it a rare and almost esoteric opinion in Calvinistic Churches. Arminianism alone could, therefore, safely restore this precious truth as a common privilege to the Church. And herein is seen the providential necessity of Arminianism as the theological basis of the Methodist movement; for what would Methodism have been without its most familiar doctrine, the "witness of the Spirit" as the common right and test of Christian experience?

Under the stirring events of these times the aged mother of Wesley was, after a long and faithful pilgrimage, enabled, "with humble boldness," to claim the consolation of that "assurance" which she had so long hesitated to accept. Such is the only possible explanation of the case.

In changing the Foundry into a chapel, he had prepared an adjacent house as a residence for himself and his assistants in London. Hither his mother now removed, and here she spent her remaining days, sustained by his filial care, and counselling him in his new responsibilities.

After his separation from the Moravians, Wesley resumed his itinerant ministrations with unabated zeal. He had appointed John Cennick, a layman, to take charge of the Kingswood society, and to pray, and expound the Scriptures, though not to preach, during his absence. Thomas Maxfield, one of his converts at Bristol, was appointed to the same duties at the Foundry in London, and about the same time John Nelson (a memorable name in the annals of Methodism) began to exhort in public, working as a mason for his bread by day, and holding meetings at night; and thus, as will hereafter be seen, originated, without design on the part of Wesley, that "lay ministry" which has spread and perpetuated Methodism in both hemispheres.

During the years 1740 and 1741 Wesley traversed many part

* Journal, Sept. 3, 1739.

of the kingdom, preaching almost daily, and sometimes four sermons on the Sabbath. Ingham, his companion in America, was abroad also, itinerating in Yorkshire, where he formed many societies. Howell Harris pursued his labours successfully in Wales, and John Bennett preached extensively in Derbyshire and its surrounding counties. David Taylor, a man of signal usefulness, also began to travel and preach about this time. He was a servant to Lord Huntingdon. Converted through the instrumentality of the Methodists, with whom Lady Huntingdon was now openly identified, he was encouraged by her to pursue his labours in the hamlets around her residence at Donnington Park. He had some education, sound sense, and good ability as a preacher. He went, under the direction of the Countess, to Glenfield and Ratby, in Leicestershire, where his discourses in the open air excited extraordinary interest, and attracted great assemblies of the rustic population. Samuel Deacon threw down his scythe in the field, and wended his way with the multitude to the preaching place; he returned to his home deeply impressed with the truth, and eventually became a distinguished preacher at Barton-fabis, in Leicestershire; his labours and church extended out into Hugglescote, Melbourne, Loughborough, Derby, Leicester (where a decayed church was resuscitated), Nottingham, and other places. All the neighbouring regions, in fine, were pervaded by the Methodistic influence thus introduced, and the salutary results continue to our day.*

Mobs began to assail the travelling evangelists, but they often "melted away like water, and were as men that had no strength," before Wesley's appeals. The rabble met him in throngs as he descended from the coach at the door of the Foundry, preventing

* The churches thus formed, together with others in Cambridge and Yorkshire, were united, in 1770, into a "connection," with Baptist principles. In 1840 it comprised one hundred and thirteen churches, eleven thousand three hundred and fifty-eight members, five district home missionary societies, a foreign missionary society, and two academies. The author of the "Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon" (vol. i. p. 44) says: "The principal strength of the New Connection of General Baptists is in the Midland Counties, and Barton-fabis is considered the 'mother of them all.' In 1802, the Midland Conference included twenty-one churches. In 1816, the Warwickshire churches, six in number, formed themselves into a separate conference; as also in 1825, four or five churches in the north of Nottinghamshire were formed into what was called the North Midland Conference. The Midland Conference, in 1832, included forty-two churches. These *forty-two* churches in the Midland Counties probably contain seven thousand members; many of the chapels are large and well attended; the Sunday schools attached have many hundred children in them. As the little one has become a thousand, may the small one at home

his entrance; but, on taking his stand in the street and preaching to them of "righteousness and judgment to come," they became a quiet and attentive congregation, and dismissed him with many blessings. Many more, he says, who came into the Foundry as lions in a short time became as lambs, the tears trickling apace down the cheeks of those who at first most loudly contradicted and blasphemed. A few days later a riotous multitude entered the building, and attempted to drown his voice by their outcries. But soon "the hammer of the Word brake the rocks in pieces; all quietly heard the glad tidings of salvation." On the following Sunday when he came home he found an innumerable mob around the door, who raised a simultaneous shout the moment they saw him. He sent his friends into the house, and then, walking into the midst of the crowd, proclaimed "the name of the Lord, gracious and merciful, and repenting him of the evil." They stood staring one at another. "I told them," he says, "they could not flee from the face of this great God, and therefore besought them that we might all join together in crying to Him for mercy." To this they readily agreed. His peculiar power was irresistible; he prayed amid the awe-struck multitude, and then went undisturbed to the little company within.

While he was passing and repassing between London and Bristol, with continual deviations to Windsor, Southampton, Leicester, Ogbrook, Nottingham, Bath, and Wales, Charles Wesley was scarcely less active. He also was assailed by persecutors. In March, 1740, he was beset by a mob at Bengeworth; he says "their tongues were set on fire of hell." One in the crowd proposed to take him away and duck him. He broke out into singing with Thomas Maxfield, and allowed them to carry him whither they would. At the bridge end of the street they relented and left him. But, instead of retreating, he took his stand there, and, singing

> "Angel of God, whate'er betide,
> Thy summons I obey,"

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and abroad become a strong nation! These details, when viewed in connection with the itinerant labours of a servant belonging to the Countess of Huntingdon, sent forth under her patronage, are peculiarly interesting. But for those labours, and the benediction of the Spirit resting upon them, giving maturity and reproduction to the seed sown, what would have been the state of thousands in those villages and towns? Coventry is a home missionary station of this district, as are also Northampton, Mansfield, Ashbourne, Macclesfield, Manchester, etc." Such is an example of that evangelical influence of Methodism, beyond its denominational limits, which has been asserted in our narrative as a part of its providential mission.

preached to some hundreds who gathered respectfully around him, from the text, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" He had fairly won the field. "Never," he says, "did I feel so much what I spoke. The Word did not return empty, as the tears on all sides testified."

He passed to Evesham, Westcot, Oxford, and other places, preaching, and notwithstanding the clamours of the people, till he arrived again in London, where the Foundry, Moorfields, and Kennington Common were his arenas. While in the City he was tireless also in pastoral labours, devoting three hours daily to "conferences" and to the "bands." In June, 1740, he was again abroad among the rural towns, accompanied by his faithful assistant, Thomas Maxfield. He preached in Bexley, Blendon, Bristol, and Kingswood. At the latter place he was especially refreshed by the good results of the Methodist labours. Methodism had already commenced those demonstrations of its efficacy among the demoralized masses which have since commanded for it the respect of men who have questioned its merits in all other respects. "Oh, what simplicity," he exclaims, "is in this childlike people! A spirit of contrition and love ran through them. Here the seed has fallen upon good ground." And again, on the next Sabbath, he writes: "I went to learn Christ among our colliers, and drank into their spirit. Oh, that our London brethren would come to school to Kingswood! God knows their poverty; but they are rich, and daily entering into rest, without first being brought into confusion. Their souls truly wait still upon God, in the way of his ordinances. Ye many masters, come, learn Christ of these outcasts, for know, 'except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.'" He questions whether Herrnhut could afford a better example of Christian simplicity and purity; and yet these reclaimed colliers were repelled from the Lord's Supper by most of the regular clergy of the churches of Bristol, because their reformation had been effected by the "irregular" labours of the Methodists.

From Kingswood he made a preaching excursion into Wales, where he spent three weeks, co-operating with Howell Harris, who, though differing from him on the "Five Points" of the Calvinistic controversy, welcomed him cordially. His last night in the Principality was one of stormy riot. He was at Cardiff, expecting to depart by water the next day; Howell Harris and a company of devout people had assembled with him there for some days, and the interest of their meetings had diverted the public

attention from the players of the theatre. The latter, joined by the populace, and led on by a physician who had taken offence at one of Wesley's sermons, assailed the assembly. Many, it is said, had bound themselves by an oath to prevent his further preaching. At night the mob attacked the house; the physician struck Wesley with his cane, but was tripped down in the confusion, and after injuring several persons, and raving like a demoniac, was carried out; but the house was quickly again broken open by two magistrates, who, however, found it desirable to retire after some inquiries. The players then besieged it. "We sang on unconcerned," he writes, "though they were armed, and threatened to burn the house. The ground of their quarrel is, that the Gospel has starved them." After midnight one of the actors got into the house, sword in hand: the weapon was wrested from him, and he thrust out. "When the sword was brought in," says Wesley, "the spirit of faith was kindled at the sight of the danger. Great was our rejoicing within, and the uproar of the players without, who strove to force their way after their companion." The hour had arrived for him to go on board the vessel; against the remonstrances of many of his friends, he resolutely walked out through the midst of the rabble; he was unmolested, and passed calmly to the waterside, where many of his friends, standing on the shore, joined him in hearty thanksgiving. The vessel being delayed, he returned on shore after some hours, and found Howell Harris and others still assembled. He preached to them again while some of his fiercest opposers stood weeping around him. He afterwards waited on a magistrate, and presented to him, as a trophy, the sword taken from the player the preceding night. Such is an illustration of the trials and the spirit of the founders of Methodism.

Returning to Bristol and Kingswood, be resumed his labours there, and visited the neighbouring towns, preaching indefatigably. He records even five sermons a-day. During the summer of 1741 he made three more excursions into Wales. His travels were rapid, his discourses incessant and powerful, his trials from persecutors not a few, but his success was immediate. He formed many societies, and opened broadly the way for the later progress of Methodism.

While the Wesleys were thus definitively founding Methodism in England, Whitefield was traversing the colonies of North America, promoting that more general but salutary influence among existing churches which was so important a part of its

mission on both sides of the Atlantic, and which forms an essential feature in its early history.*

He left England, as we have seen, on his second voyage to America, in August, 1739, and landed at Philadelphia in the beginning of November. His eloquence set the city astir immediately; its effects are described as "truly astonishing." People of all denominations, Quakers, Presbyterians, Baptists, as well as Churchmen, thronged the churches, and after he had departed, public service was held twice every day, and three and four times on Sundays, for about a year, and the city, though then comparatively small, kept up twenty-six societies for social prayer.† Though the churches were at his command, he preached often in the open air, for the eager multitudes could not find room in any building. The favourite place for his out-door preaching was the balcony of the old court-house (since Market-house), in Market Street. His powerful voice was heard on the opposite shore of New Jersey, and the crews of vessels on the Delaware could distinguish his words.‡

He passed to New York, and on his route through New Jersey proclaimed his message in the principal towns to thousands, who gathered from all the surrounding regions. A general religious interest had been previously excited among them by the labours of Frelinghuysen, the Tennents, Blair, and Rowland.§ He records that Tennent and his brethren had begun an institution for the education of pastors. The building in which the young men were then studying was a log-house, about twenty feet long and nearly as many broad. From this "despised place" seven or eight worthy ministers of Christ had been sent forth, and a foundation was being laid for the instruction of many others. The work, he was persuaded, was of God, and "therefore would not come to naught." Thus arose the theological fame of Princeton. Nassau Hall received a Methodistic baptism at its birth. Whitefield inspirited its founders, and was honoured by it with the title of A.M.; the Methodists in England gave it funds; and one of

* See Isaac Taylor's Methodism. Much of this able but unsatisfactory work discusses "Methodism" as distinguished from "Wesleyanism."

† Memoirs of Mrs. Hannah Hodge. Philadelphia, 1806.

‡ Note to American edition of Gillies's Life of Whitefield. Philadelphia, 1854.

§ Physical effects like those which had attended the Methodist preaching in England had already occurred in New Jersey under the ministration of Rowland; the hearers "fainted away," and numbers were carried out of the church in a state of insensibility. Gillies's Whitefield, chap. v.

its noblest presidents was the correspondent of Wesley, and honoured him as a "restorer" of the true faith.*

He spent a week in New York, preaching thrice a-day in churches, and in the open air.† Returning on land to Georgia, he preached throughout his route sometimes to ten thousand people. Many enthusiastic Philadelphians accompanied him as a cavalcade sixty miles from the city. About the middle of January he was with his family at the Orphan House, where forty children were soon gathered under his protection. In a short time he found it necessary to resume his travels, in order to collect funds for their support. Taking passage for Newcastle, Delaware, he was before long again addressing thousands in Philadelphia. "Societies for praying and singing" were multiplied "in every part of the town;" and a hundred and forty of his converts were organized into a church in one day by Gilbert Tennent. His route through New Jersey was attended, as before, by vast congregations. Since his previous visit, a general outward reformation had become visible. Many ministers had been quickened in

* When Davies and Gilbert Tennent were in England soliciting aid for the college, fifteen years later, Tennent called on Wesley in London. The latter alludes to the visit with an expression of his characteristic catholicity. "He informed me," he writes, "of his design, now ready to be executed, of founding an American college for Protestants of every denomination; *an admirable design if it will bring Protestants of every denomination to bear with one another.*" —*Journal*, anno 1751. Princeton has verified Wesley's doubt rather than his hope—and from necessity as much, perhaps, as from choice. American sects have derived but questionable advantages from such combinations. President Davies corresponded with Wesley, and addressed him in language which Methodists have not usually had the pleasure to receive from their Calvinistic brethren. "Though you and I," he said, "may differ in some little things, I have long loved you and your brother, and wished and prayed for your success, as zealous revivers of experimental Christianity. If I differ from you in temper and design, or in the essentials of religion, I am sure the error must be on my side. Blessed be God for hearts to love one another! How great is the honour God has conferred upon you in making you a restorer of declining religion!" See his letter in Wesley's Journal, anno 1757.

† The English Church was denied him. He preached usually in Dr. Pemberton's Presbyterian meeting-house in Wall Street, the only one of that denomination in New York, and in front of the old Exchange in Broad Street, near Water Street; and still later at the "Brick Meeting," which was then "in the fields." The effect of his labours was such that Pemberton's church had to be repeatedly enlarged. In this city occurred the well-known illustration of his dramatic power, when, preaching to a large number of sailors, he introduced a description of a storm and shipwreck, carrying away their imaginations so irresistibly that in the climax of the catastrophe they sprang to their feet, exclaiming: "Take to the long boat!"—Conant's Narratives of Remarkable Conversions and Revival Incidents, etc. New York, 1858.

their zeal to preach the Word in season and out of season, and their congregations were greatly enlarged. Several preachers, prompted by his example, went forth travelling and labouring among the towns. After visiting New York with unabated success, he again returned to Savannah. But his fame had spread to New England, and Rev. Drs. Colman and Cooper, of Boston, sent letters to Georgia, urging him to visit them. Again he took passage for the north, and arrived at Newport, Rhode Island, September 14, 1740. He began immediately his usual course of incessant preaching. His sermons on his way to Boston spread his reputation, and when within ten miles' distance he was met by the governor's son, and a train of the clergy and chief citizens, who escorted him into the city. Belcher, the governor, received him heartily, and became his warm friend. He was denied "King's Chapel," the English church; but Webb, Foxcroft, Prince, Sewell, and all the other Puritan divines, welcomed him. His preaching had its usual effect. "It was Puritanism revived," said old Mr. Walter, the successor of Eliot, the apostle to the Indians. "It was the happiest day I ever saw in my life," exclaimed Colman, after his first sermon. He "itinerated" northward from Boston, travelling one hundred and seventy miles, and preaching sixteen times in about a week. On his return the whole city seemed moved. High and low, clergymen and municipal officers, professors and students from the neighbouring college of Cambridge, and people from the country towns thronged to hear him, and appeared ready to "pluck out their eyes for him." Twenty thousand hearers crowded around him when he delivered his farewell discourse under the trees of the Common, where Lee, the founder of Methodism in New England, was afterwards to preach his first sermon in Boston. "Such a power and presence of God with a preacher," wrote one who heard him, "I never saw before. Our governor has carried him from place to place in his coach, and could not help following him fifty miles out of town."

He directed his course westward to Northampton, where he met a congenial spirit in Jonathan Edwards. Pulpits were open to him on all the route, and a "divine unction" attended his preaching. From Northampton he passed down to New Haven, addressing as he journeyed vast and deeply affected congregations. He arrived there October 23, when the Colonial Legislature was in session, and on the Sabbath preached before them and an immense throng, some of whom had come twenty miles to hear him. The aged governor was so deeply affected that he could

speak but few words; with tears trickling down his cheeks like drops of rain, he exclaimed: "Thanks be to God for such refreshings on our way to heaven!"

By November 8th he was again in Philadelphia, preaching in a house which had been erected for him during his absence, and which afterward became the Union Methodist Episcopal Church. On the 14th of December he reached the Orphan House, near Savannah. In seventy-five days he had preached a hundred and seventy-five sermons, and received upwards of seven hundred pounds sterling for his orphans. "Never," he writes, "did I see such a continuance of the Divine presence in the congregations to which I have preached." Never had preacher or any other orator led the masses more triumphantly. He had stirred the consciences of tens of thousands from Maine to Georgia, and doubtless, by these and his subsequent travels, did much to prepare the soil for that harvest of Methodism which in our day has "shaken like Lebanon" along all his course.

On the 16th of January, 1741, he again embarked at Charleston for England.

CHAPTER III.

SEPARATION OF WESLEY FROM WHITEFIELD.

The Calvinistic Controversy—Character of Wesley's Mind—The Difficulties of Calvinism to such a Mind—Arminianism, as defined at the Synod of Dort—Intellectual Character of Whitefield—His Adoption of Calvinistic Opinions—Historical Importance of the Dispute between Wesley and Whitefield—Wesley excludes it from his Societies—It disturbs them in London—Difficulties at Kingswood—John Cennick—Wesley's Sermon on "Free Grace"—Whitefield's Return to England—His Separation from Wesley—Unsuccessful Attempts at Reconciliation.

While these good and great men were thus abroad, labouring exclusively for the moral recovery of souls, and confining themselves to those vital truths which alone were essential to this end, a serious occasion of discord occurred between them, but the painful record of their partial alienation, which the fidelity of history requires, is relieved by the fact, acknowledged by both Wesley and Whitefield, that the important movement in which they were engaged took a wider sway from their differences of opinion. These differences related to the problem of Predestination—the insoluble difficulties which for so many ages have

been fruitful causes of contention and bigotry among good men, and must continue to be so till they are transferred from Dogmatic Theology to their more legitimate place in the sphere of Metaphysics.

Wesley, as we have seen, early and definitively took the Arminian view of these questions, and was confirmed in that view of them by the correspondence of his mother while he was yet at Oxford. If, as some of his critics say, his intellect was more logical than philosophical, this was, perhaps, one of his chief qualifications for his appointed work. What was needed in the theological development of Methodism was clear, pointed definitions, rather than philosophic generalizations, of those elementary evangelical truths which are most essential to the personal salvation of men; for, in its positive bearing, Methodism was to be a spiritual, rather than a dogmatic or ecclesiastical reform, its effects on the dogmatic and ecclesiastical errors of the times being chiefly negative, and the more effective for being such. No thinker in the modern Church has excelled Wesley in the direct logic, the precision, the transparent clearness, and popular suitableness with which he presented the experimental truths of Christianity. Faith, Justification, Regeneration, Sanctification, the Witness of the Spirit, these were his themes, and never were they better defined and discriminated by an English theologian: and the keen faculty and practical directness with which he thus treated theological ideas was, perhaps, equally important in guiding him to those effective expedients of church government which have won for him, from the greatest historian of his country, the eulogy of having had "a genius for government not inferior to that of Richelieu." *

It was impossible that a mind thus addicted to precise conceptions and direct conclusions, rather than generalizations, should hesitate which side to take in the Calvinistic controversy. Even the modern qualifications of Calvinism, stated in the pious, compromising spirit of Baxter, could not satisfy him. It were vain to say to such a thinker that in predestinating the elect to be saved, God had only passed by the reprobates, leaving them to their own natural wickedness and fate. His prompt reply would be that, according to his opponents, the foreknowing God created the reprobate in his wickedness, and under his inevitable doom, and he would devolve upon them the formidable task of showing how then the unassisted offcast could be held responsible for his

* Macaulay's Review of Southey's Colloquies, Edinburgh Review, 1850. See also his Critical and Historical Essays, vol. i., p. 210.

fate. He would require them, also, to reconcile with such a condition of, perhaps, nine-tenths of the human race, the Divine beneficence; the Scriptural warnings and invitations addressed to them; the universal redemption made for them, or, if that were denied, the explicit Scriptural offers of it; their responsibility for their moral conduct, which, if alleged to be voluntary, is so, nevertheless, because their volitions are bound by an eternal decree, or, at least, by the absence of that Divine grace by which alone the will can be corrected. The inevitable salvation of the elect, according to the dogma of Final Perseverance, he would also insist to be logically dangerous to good morals. The philosophical predestinarian would not admit the logical pertinency of these difficulties; it is not the province of the historian to discuss them polemically; it is sufficient to say that such was the character of Wesley's mind, and such the consequences which he drew from the Calvinistic theology. And yet, as we shall presently see, he was already too conscious of the peculiar mission of Methodism as a spiritual development of the Reformation, to attach fundamental importance to the question, or to make it a condition of membership in his societies.

In avowing Arminian opinions, and in giving that title to the magazine which he subsequently established,* he did not adopt the perversions which many of the disciples of Arminius have taught in Europe, and which have too often since been confounded with Arminianism by its opponents. He found in the writings of that great and devout theologian an evangelical system of opinions, as he thought, and Arminianism, as stated by the Remonstrants at the Synod of Dort, he did heartily receive, namely: 1. That God did decree to confer salvation on those who, he foresaw, would maintain their faith in Christ Jesus inviolate until death; and, on the other hand, to consign over to eternal punishment the unbelieving who resist his invitations to the end of their lives. 2. That Jesus Christ, by his death, made expiation for the sins of all and every one of mankind; yet that none but believers can become partakers of its divine benefit. 3. That no one can of himself, or by the powers of his free will, produce or generate faith in his own mind; but that man being by nature evil, and incompetent (*ineptus*) both to think and to do good, it is necessary he should be born again and renewed by God, for Christ's sake, through the Holy Spirit. 4. That this divine grace or energy, which heals the soul of man, perfects all that can be called truly good in him, yet that this grace compels

* He commenced the Arminian Magazine in 1778.

no man against his will, though he may be repelled by his will. 5. That those who are united to Christ by faith are furnished with sufficient strength to overcome sin; but that it is possible for a man to lose his faith and fall from a state of grace.*

While Wesley's mind was severely dialectic, and in some cases, doubtless, too much so, Whitefield's was quite the reverse. He seldom or never attempts a logical statement of his opinions; his logic was in his heart rather than in his head; and his feelings, happily of the purest temper, and guided by the conscience rather than the reason, usually determined his opinions. But the logic of the feelings, though the most important in ordinary life, that upon which the most responsible relations and duties are devolved by nature herself, is baffled in the presence of these speculative mysteries. An accidental bias may make a man like Whitefield a bigot through life, for or against them. Had Whitefield thought of the controversy, for the first time, while preaching with tears before twenty thousand neglected and depraved hearers in Moorfields; had the question whether the atonement comprehended them all, and whether all could "turn and live," come up then for an answer, he would have shouted the affirmative to the wretched multitude, and been an unwavering Arminian ever after.† But he saw the controversy from a different standpoint. He felt himself to have been so vile a sinner that he could not but ascribe his salvation to infinite and sovereign grace. Wesley would have granted this, but would also have asked the question, Why not exalt this sovereign grace still more by allowing that it has provided for all men? Whitefield saw thousands not more depraved than he had been, yet unreclaimed; his grateful heart, therefore, assumed, not with egotism, but with contrition, that a special grace had mysteriously plucked him out from the lost multitude. "Free grace," he exclaimed in a letter to Wesley, "free, indeed, because not to all; but free, because God may withhold or give it to whom and when He pleases." And his ebullient spirit found so much delight in the hope of his final salvation, that the doctrine of "Final Perseverance" was eagerly seized by him, with apparently no hesitancy at its possible bad consequences to men of less conscientious fervour. In all his

* The last proposition was left undecided at the time of the Synod, but adopted by the Arminians afterwards. See Murdock's *Mosheim's Seventeenth Century*.

† He seems, indeed, not to have liked the public preaching of Predestination down to the time of his breach with Wesley. Before the crisis of the dispute he proposed silence to Wesley, and assured him that whatever had been his own opinions on the question he had never preached them.

letters to Wesley, during the dispute that now occurred between them, we find but one allusion to "Reprobation;" that was an aspect of the subject which he seemed inclined not to think of; it was "Electing Grace" which absorbed his thoughts—"Final Perseverance"—the inestimable mercy of God in rescuing even elect souls from perdition, without a reference to his severity in creating and then abandoning for ever the lost masses of reprobates. He had not read, he says, a single work of Calvin: he was "taught the doctrine of God;" he even had "the Witness of the Spirit" respecting it, and pronounces Wesley no proper "judge of its truth," as he had not received that witness on the question.* "God himself," he says, in another letter, "God himself, I find, teaches my friends the doctrine of election. Sister M. has lately been convinced of it; and, if I mistake not, dear and honoured Mr. Wesley will be hereafter convinced also." Wesley was affected by the tender spirit of the correspondence. He replied: "The case is quite plain; there are bigots both for predestination and against it; God is sending a message to either side, but neither will receive it unless from one who is of their own opinion. Therefore for a time you are suffered to be of one opinion and I of another. But when His time is come, God will do what men cannot—namely, make us both of one mind." The prediction was fulfilled in its best sense, for, though never one in opinion, they became one in heart, and their separate courses in public life verified Wesley's opinion of the providential design of their theological divergence.

The dispute between them at this time is not without historical importance, as it doubtless led to the later controversy between Fletcher and his opponents, which has influenced Methodist opinions throughout the world, and which, it can be wished, more perhaps than hoped, may be the last great struggle on the question, before it shall be finally consigned by theologians over to the unavailing studies of metaphysicians, a suggestion which dogmatists will be slow to receive, but which, nevertheless, the popular good sense of Christendom is irresistibly forcing upon them.

Tenacious as Wesley was of his personal opinions, we have said that he did not insist on the Arminian doctrines as a condition of membership in his societies. All he required was, that disputes respecting them should not be obtruded into devotional meetings by either party. His first trouble on the subject was

* See the correspondence, quite impartially given, by Southey, Life of Wesley, chap. xi.

from a member of one of the London societies, by the name of Acourt, who would debate it in the meetings of his brethren. Charles Wesley forbade his admission. He presented himself at a subsequent meeting, when John was present, and inquired if he had been excluded for his opinions? "Which opinions?" asked Wesley. "That of election," he replied. "I hold that a certain number are elected from eternity, and they must and shall be saved, and the rest of mankind must and shall be damned!" He asserted that others of the society so believed. Wesley replied that he never questioned their opinions; all he demanded was that they should "only not trouble others by disputing about them." "Nay, but I will dispute about them," responded the hearty Calvinist; "you are all wrong, and I am determined to set you right." "I fear, said Wesley, "that your coming with this view will neither profit you nor us." "I will go then," replied Acourt, "and tell all the world that you and your brother are false prophets, and I tell you that in a fortnight you will all be in confusion."* Wesley was not a man to be subdued by such logic.

What induced him to take at last a decisive course respecting this controversy was the discovery that John Cennick, his "helper" at Kingswood, had attacked his Arminianism publicly. The school at Kingswood was entirely distinct from the seminary which afterwards became noted there as Wesley's school for "preachers' sons." Whitefield had performed the ceremony of laying its foundation-stone, but left the institution immediately in the hands of Wesley. "I bought the ground where it stands," says Wesley, "and paid for building it, partly from the contributions of my friends, partly from the income of my fellowship." John Cennick was employed by him as teacher, and though a layman, was authorized by him to expound the Scriptures to the society which Wesley himself had gathered in the vicinity, and which met in the seminary. Cennick was an earnest, pious young man. He first met the Wesleys in London, in 1739, and being poor, and without employment, was sent to Kingswood at the instance of Charles Wesley. He did well there for some time. In 1740 he dissented from the preaching of "Universal Redemption," which, however, he had publicly approved before, on a visit of Charles Wesley. He raised a party against the doctrine and his patrons. He wrote letters to Whitefield, in America, urging his immediate return to suppress the heresy. Wesley was justly indignant at this treatment, from a man whom he himself employed,

* Wesley's Journal, June 19th, 1740.

and who attempted to "supplant him in his own house." The harmony of the society was disturbed: many efforts were made to restore it; but Cennick was obstinate, and insisted that himself and his adherents, while retaining their membership, should also "meet apart." After unavailing delays and overtures of peace, Wesley read publicly a paper declaring, "by the consent and approbation of the Band Society of Kingswood," that Cennick and his followers "were no longer members thereof." One of the accused asserted that it was not for any strife or disorder that they were expelled, but only for holding the doctrine of election. Wesley replied that they knew in their own consciences this was not the case; that there were several predestinarians in the societies, both in London and Bristol, nor did he "ever yet put any one out of either because he held that opinion." About fifty persons adhered to Cennick, and upwards of ninety to Wesley.

Cennick afterwards united with the Whitefield Methodists, but did not continue long with them. He became at last a Moravian. He was a good, though weak man, and his subsequent earnest and laborious life shows that he deserves more lenience than has usually been accorded to him by Methodist writers.*

These events convinced Wesley that it was time to protest against the Calvinistic doctrines publicly. He immediately preached in Bristol the most impassioned of his sermons, containing passages as eloquent as the pulpit literature of our language affords.† It was printed, and was the third of his published discourses; the first was issued on his embarkation for Georgia, a farewell message to his friends on "The Trouble and Rest of Good Men;" the second was on "Salvation by Faith," preached and printed soon after his own conversion; the present discourse was on "Free Grace." It was sent by his opponents to Whitefield, who was then in America. Whitefield wrote frequent letters to him, remonstrating against his opinions, but still sincerely proposing mutual peace. His intercourse with the New England clergy had, however, deepened his interest for the Calvinistic opinions. Assisted by his American friends, he composed

* Jackson treats him impartially: "Life of Charles Wesley," chap. viii. The eccentric Matthew Wilks published his sermons, with a "Life" prefixed, and says: "He possessed a sweet simplicity of spirit, with an ardent zeal in the cause of his divine Master."

† When the late Earl of Liverpool read its peroration in Southey, he declared that in his judgment it was the most eloquent passage he had ever met with in any writer, ancient or modern. Jackson's "Life of Charles Wesley," chap. viii.

an answer to Wesley, and had it printed at Boston, and also in Charleston, South Carolina.

On the 11th of March, 1741, Whitefield again reached England, and the next Sabbath was preaching in the open air at Kennington Common. But his reception was disheartening. His Calvinistic sentiments had become known by his correspondence. A letter from him against Wesley's opinions had been surreptitiously printed before his arrival, and circulated at the door of the Foundry. Wesley stood up in the desk with a copy of it in his hand, and, referring to its disingenuous publication, said he would do what he believed his friend, the writer, would, were he present, and tore it into pieces. The congregation spontaneously did so with the copies which had been given them at the door.

A violent prejudice now spread against Whitefield, and the people refused to hear him. He still wished for peace with the Wesleys. He hastened to Charles Wesley, who was in London, and says it would have melted any heart to have seen them weeping, "after prayer that the breach might be prevented." He soon began to believe, however, that he was sacrificing the truth by not preaching election, and when John Wesley returned to the city, Whitefield declared that they preached two different Gospels, that he could no longer give the Wesleys the right hand of fellowship, but must preach against them. When reminded that he had just before promised and prayed for peace, he pronounced his promise an error, a weakness, and retracted it.*

Whitefield's strength was also his weakness. The ardour which made him powerful when right, rendered him impetuous when wrong, and he now committed some grave but temporary errors. He preached against the Wesleys by name in Moorfields, not far from the Foundry, where his old friends were preaching at the same time. He addressed them a letter, finding fault with petty details in the chapel furniture at Kingswood; but when approached by them, his better feelings revived. They invited him to preach at the Foundry; yet there, before thousands of hearers, and with Charles Wesley by his side, he proclaimed the absolute decrees in a most peremptory and offensive manner.† Wesley had repeated interviews with him, and sought for a reconciliation; but the attempt was useless. Wesley protests, at a later period, that the breach was not necessary; that those who believed Universal Redemption had no desire to separate, but

* Wesley's Journal, March 1741.

† John Wesley's Letter to Rev. Thomas Maxfield. London, 1778. Jackson's "Life of Charles Wesley," chap. viii.

those who held Particular Redemption would not hear of any accommodation. "So," he adds, "there were now two sorts of Methodists, those for particular and those for general redemption."* He insists, at another time, that had it not been for the "manner" in which the Calvinistic party maintained their doctrine, the division might have been avoided; that difference of doctrine need not have created any difference of affection, but Whitefield "might have lovingly held *particular* redemption, and we *general* to our lives' end."†

Thus did Methodism divide into two currents, but thereby watered a wider range of the moral wilderness. Both flowed from the same source and in the same general direction. Both parties still adhered to the Church of England, availing themselves of the historical if not literal ambiguity of its seventeenth Article. Neither yet thought of forming a distinct ecclesiastical organization, and both soon after entered into cordial relations, though pursuing their common work in separate courses. Methodism, in fine, still continued to be a general evangelical movement, ostensibly within the English Church, though not hesitating to reach into any opening beyond it. Its history, therefore, if properly written, must still be a unit.‡

CHAPTER IV.

THE CALVINISTIC METHODISTS.

Whitefield's Tabernacle opened—He employs Lay Preachers—Is reconciled with Wesley—Goes to Scotland—Wonderful Effects of his Preaching—Scenes at Cambuslang—Slight Success of Methodism in Scotland—Remarkable Scene at Moorfields—The Countess of Huntingdon—Whitefield Preaching at her Mansion—Noble Hearers: Chesterfield, Bolingbroke, Walpole, Hume—The Countess erects Chapels—Her Liberality—The School of the Prophets at Trevecca—Her Followers become Dissenters.

THE loss of Whitefield's popularity in London could be but temporary. His zeal and eloquence could not fail to triumph over popular disaffection. Evangelical Calvinists gathered about

* Wesley's Short History of Methodism. Works.

† Letter to Maxfield. Jackson's "Charles Wesley," chap. viii.

‡ The anonymous author of "The Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon," has abused the Wesleys by many false details in his sketch of this dispute. I have not deemed it necessary to encumber my pages with them. The reader will find them fully answered in Jackson's "Life of Charles Wesley," chap. viii.

him, and some of them proposed to erect for him a place of worship. A lot of ground was secured near Wesley's Foundry, and the celebrated Tabernacle quickly rose upon it. The new building was immediately crowded, and, following Wesley's example, which he had before disapproved, Whitefield secured the assistance of lay preachers. Cennick and Humphries, both of whom had been Wesley's "helpers," joined him, and soon after Howell Harris came to his aid from Wales.

Though operating thus at separate batteries, and in near proximity, Wesley and Whitefield did not long maintain opposing fires, but turned them against the common enemy. "All," says Whitefield, "was wonderfully overruled for good, and for the furtherance of the Gospel."* They were soon personally reconciled; cordial letters passed between them; brotherly meetings took place, and they preached in each other's pulpit. "May you be blessed in bringing souls to Christ more and more," wrote Whitefield to Charles Wesley. "Our Lord exceedingly blesses us at the Tabernacle. Behold what a happy thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." The poet of Methodism responded in one of his noblest lyrics.† "Bigotry," said John Wesley, writing of Whitefield at a later date, when distinguished Calvinists were patronizing him, "bigotry cannot stand before him, but hides its head wherever he comes. My brother and I conferred with him every day; and let the honourable men do what they please, we resolved, by the grace of God, to go on hand in hand through honour and dishonour."

It would be impossible to detail, within our appropriate limits, the marvellous labours and successes of Whitefield during the three years of his present sojourn in England. Though separated from Wesley, he desired not to establish a sect; he knew that he was not competent to do so; he lacked the requisite legislative capacity; but as he represented Calvinistic Methodism, Calvinistic clergymen and churches encouraged his labours. The Erskines of Scotland, distinguished as leaders of the Scotch Secession, invited him thither, and he made two excursions beyond the Tweed before his next return to America. The Erskines and their brethren of the Associate Presbytery were staunch zealots for the Solemn League and Covenant, which forms so interesting a feature in not only the ecclesiastical, but the civil

* Gillies's Whitefield, chap. viii.

† Hymn for the Rev. Mr. Whitefield and Messrs. Wesley. See Jackson's "Life of Charles Wesley," chap. viii. This spirited poem is unfortunately omitted in the American edition.

history, and even the romantic literature of the country. They could make no compromise with English Churchmen, or any others who differed from themselves. Soon after his arrival at Dunfermline, where Ralph Erskine resided, Whitefield was surprised by a grave but ludicrous scene; ludicrous by its very gravity. He found himself introduced into the presence of several venerable members of the Associate Presbytery, who proposed to proceed to business in formal session. He inquired for what purpose. They gravely replied, to consult and set him right about Church order and the Solemn League and Covenant. He assured them they might save themselves that trouble; that he had no difficulties about either subject, and to intermeddle with either was not within "his plan." Yielding to his devout feelings, he proceeded to relate his Christian experience, and how Providence had led him into his present catholic course of action. Some of them were deeply affected by the singular narrative. Ebenezer Erskine entreated their forbearance with him as a good man who had unfortunately been born and bred in England, and had never studied the Solemn League and Covenant. One of the Associate divines replied, that he was the less excusable on this account, for England had revolted most in regard to Church government, and he should be acquainted with the important matters in debate. Whitefield insisted that he had never made them a subject of study, being too busy with more important interests. Several of the sturdy Scotchmen repelled the hint. "Every pin in the tabernacle," they said, was important. He begged them to do good in their own way, and to allow him to proceed in his. They dissented; he then entreated them to say what they would have him do. They demanded that if he could not forthwith sign the Solemn League and Covenant, he should at least preach only for them till he was better enlightened, for they were the people of the Lord. It was even suggested that two of their brethren should be deputed with him to England to settle a Presbytery there, and two more to accompany him to America for a similar purpose.

He declined to take sides with either of the Scotch parties, but was determined to preach, as he had opportunity, for both. "If the pope himself," he said to the astonished Ralph Erskine—"if the pope himself would lend me his pulpit, I would gladly declare the righteousness of Jesus Christ therein." The Seceders, absorbed by local controversies and the Solemn League and Covenant, could not comprehend him, and left him to himself. One of them mounted the pulpit, and preached against the English

Church, declaring that any one who held communion with it, or with "the backslidden Church of Scotland could not be an instrument of reformation." They afterwards appointed a day of fasting and prayer against him.* He preached, however, with great success in the kirks of some thirty towns and cities, delivering from two to seven sermons a-day, and left them in a general religious revival.

On his second visit, in the spring of 1742, he was received with enthusiasm. Multitudes met him at the landing at Leith, weeping for joy, and welcoming him with blessings. They followed his coach to Edinburgh, and crowded around him when he alighted, pressing him in their arms. His preaching stirred the whole city. The churches could not contain the people, and an amphitheatre, under awnings, had to be constructed in the Park for their accommodation. He was called to the west, and made a tour of several weeks through its principal towns, preaching daily, and leaving a profound sensation wherever he went.

At Cambuslang the popular interest reached a height which was never equalled elsewhere under his labours. He preached three times on the day of his arrival to many thousands. The third discourse was at nine o'clock at night, and continued till eleven, "amid such a commotion," he says, "as scarcely ever was heard of." A fellow-clergyman relieved him at eleven, and preached on till one in the morning. All night the voice of prayer and praise could be heard in the fields. This remarkable introduction soon brought all the surrounding population to hear him. A "brae," or hill, near the manse, was occupied instead of the church. "The people," he writes, "seem to be slain by scores. They are carried off, and come into the house like soldiers wounded in and carried off a field of battle. Their cries and agonies are exceedingly affecting." At another time a great

* Gillies's Whitefield, chaps. viii. x. A violent pamphlet, characteristic of the times, was issued against him, entitled, "A Warning against countenancing the Ministrations of Mr. George Whitefield. Together with an Appendix upon the same Subject, wherein are shown that Mr. Whitefield is no Minister of Jesus Christ; that his Call and Coming to Scotland are scandalous; that his Practice is disorderly and fertile of Disorder; that his whole Doctrine is, and his Success must be Diabolical; so that people ought to avoid him from Duty to God, to the Church, to Themselves, to Fellow-Men, to Posterity, to Him. By Adam Gib, Minister of the Gospel at Edinburgh. Edinburgh, 1742." This curious publication is noticed in Philip's Whitefield. A copy of it (the only one perhaps in America) is in the Library of the General Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church, New York.

sacramental occasion was held, in imitation of Hezekiah's Passover. More than twenty thousand people were present. Three tents were set up for the administration of the Supper, and twenty clergymen assisted in the service. There was preaching all day to such as could not get access to the administrators, and at nightfall Whitefield preached to the whole mass. Though usually occupying but about half an hour in his sermons, he now stood up for an hour and a-half, speaking with irresistible power. The next morning, he says, "I preached again to near as many, but such a universal stir I never saw before. The motion fled as swift as lightning from one end of the auditory to the other. You might have seen thousands bathed in tears, some at the same time wringing their hands, others almost swooning, and others crying out and mourning over a pierced Saviour."

By these and subsequent labours in Scotland did Whitefield promote the mission of Methodism to that land. In no part of Europe had the Reformation more thoroughly wrought its work among the common people. An intelligent, frugal, and religious population, they needed less than any other the provocations of zeal which are usually furnished by new sects. Wesley marvelled at their insusceptibility to Methodism; but Methodism at this time was more important as a general moral movement, pervading the old churches and the whole public mind, than as a sectarian development more or less organized. In the former sense it did a good work in Scotland. The revivals under Whitefield's preaching spread new energy through much of the Kirk, and since the era of Methodism, Scotland has shared that mighty influence of the movement which has been manifest in the religious progress of the whole United Kingdom. Her increased spiritual life, her foreign missions, her scarcely paralleled fidelity to the independence and integrity of the Church in the organization of her grand "Free Kirk," show that she has felt profoundly the religious spirit of our times. Arminian Methodists may condemn her tenacious Calvinism, but they should remember that Methodism itself proposes to ignore the Calvinistic controversy as a condition of Church communion. If Methodism regrets its little progress in Scotland, it may at least console itself that there is less reason for this regret there than in any other country in the world.

At London, Whitefield could not long be content with his spacious Tabernacle, but took again the open field. The most riotous scenes at Moorfields were usually during the Whitsun holidays. The devils then held their rendezvous there, he said,

and he resolved "to meet them in pitched battle." He began early in order to secure the field before the greatest rush of the crowd. At six o'clock in the morning he found ten thousand people waiting impatiently for the sports of the day. Mounting his field pulpit, and assured that he "had for once got the start of the devil," he soon drew the whole multitude around him. At noon he again took the field. Between twenty and thirty thousand swarmed upon it. He described it as in complete possession of Beelzebub, whose agents were in full motion. Drummers, trumpeters, merry-andrews, masters of puppet-shows, exhibitors of wild beasts, players, were all busy in entertaining their respective groups. He shouted his text, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," and boldly charged home upon the vice and peril of their dissipations. The craftsmen were alarmed, and the battle he had anticipated and challenged now fairly began. Stones, dirt, rotten eggs, and dead cats were thrown at him. "My soul," he says, "was among lions;" but before long he prevailed, and the immense multitude were turned into lambs." At six in the evening he was again in his field pulpit. "I came," he says, "and I saw; but what? Thousands and thousands more than before." He rightly judged that Satan could not brook such repeated assaults in such circumstances, and never, perhaps, had they been pushed more bravely home against the very citadel of his power. A harlequin was exhibiting and trumpeting on a stage, but was deserted as soon as the people saw Whitefield, in his black robes, ascend his pulpit. He "lifted up his voice like a trumpet, and many heard the joyful sound." At length they approached nearer, and the merry-andrew, attended by others, who complained that they had taken many pounds less that day on account of the preaching, got upon a man's shoulders, and advancing towards the pulpit, attempted several times to strike the preacher with a long, heavy whip, but always tumbled down by the violence of his motion. The mob next secured the aid of a recruiting sergeant, who, with music and straggling followers, marched directly through the crowd before the pulpit. Whitefield knew instinctively how to manage the passions and whims of the people. He called out to them to make way for the king's officer. The sergeant, with assumed official dignity, and his drum and fife, passed through the opened ranks, which closed immediately after him, and left the solid mass still in possession of the preacher. A third onslaught was attempted. Roaring like wild beasts on the outskirts of the assembly, a large number combined for the purpose of sweeping through it in solid column. They bore a

long pole for their standard, and came on with the sound of drum and menacing shouts, but soon quarrelled among themselves, threw down their pole and dispersed, leaving many of their number behind, "who were brought over to join the besieged party." * At times, however, the tumult rose like the noise of many waters, drowning the preacher's voice; he would then call upon his brethren near him to unite with him in singing, until the clamorous host were again charmed into silence. He was determined not to retreat defeated; preaching, praying, singing, he kept his ground until night closed the strange scene. It was one of the greatest of his field-days. He had won the victory, and moved off with his religious friends to celebrate it at night in the Tabernacle; and great were the spoils there exhibited. No less than a thousand notes were afterwards handed up to him for prayers, from persons who had been brought "under conviction" that day; and, soon after, upward of three hundred were received into the society at one time. Many of them were "the devil's castaways," as he called them. Some he had to marry, for they had been living together without marriage; and "numbers that seemed to have been bred up for Tyburn were at that time plucked as brands from the burning." It may be doubted whether the history of Christianity affords a more encouraging example of the power of the Gospel over the rudest minds, and in the most hopeless circumstances. The moral sense will respond to Divine truth from the depths of the most degraded soul, and amid the wildest tumults of mobs. The response may not be heard; it may be stifled; but it is felt. The Apostles knew the fact, and ancient heathenism fell before the confidence with which it inspired their ministrations. The charge of enthusiasm applies doubtless to these labours of Whitefield; but it is a compliment rather than a detraction. In less urgent circumstances such enthusiasm might appear to be fanaticism, but here it was legitimate. How were these heathen masses to be otherwise reached by the Gospel? Thousands of them never entered the churches of London. Clothed in rags, their very persons labelled with the marks of vice and wretchedness, they would have hardly found admission into them had they sought it. Moorfields must be invaded if it were to be conquered, and no less energetic invasions than those which Whitefield and Wesley made there, could be successful. They were successful; and the suppression, at last, of the enormous scenes of that and similar resorts in England, is attributable greatly to the moral triumphs

* Gillies's Whitefield, chap. ix.

of Methodism among the degraded classes of the common people.

Besides his labours in London and Scotland, Whitefield travelled extensively in England before his next embarkation for Georgia, in 1744. His popularity had fully returned. At Bristol assemblies more numerous than ever attended his preaching. Even in the minor towns ten or twelve thousand were his frequent estimates of his hearers, for the population of all neighbouring villages usually thronged to the places of his out-door sermons. He made repeated tours through Wales, and each time with increased success. In one of these visits, employing three weeks, he travelled four hundred English miles, preached forty sermons, and spent three days in attending associations of the new societies. "At seven in the morning," he writes, "have I seen perhaps ten thousand from different parts, in the midst of a sermon, crying *Gogonniant bendigedig* (Glory! Blessed!), ready to leap for joy." "The work began by Mr. Jones spreads far and near in North and South Wales."

Though Whitefield designed not to establish a Methodist sect, circumstances compelled him, after his separation from Wesley, to give a somewhat organized form to the results of his labours among the Calvinistic adherents who gathered about him. Lady Betty Hastings had patronized the little band of Methodists at Oxford; Lady Margaret Hastings, her sister, had adopted, through her influence, the Methodist sentiments, and afterwards married Ingham, who was one of the Oxford Methodists, and the companion of Wesley in Georgia. Her influence over her sister-in-law Selina, the Countess of Huntingdon, led the Countess, during a serious sickness, to a religious life, and to a strong sympathy with the Methodists. Bishop Benson, who had ordained Whitefield, and had been tutor to her husband, the Earl of Huntingdon, was called by the latter to restore his wife to a "saner" mind. The good bishop failed in the attempt, and expressed regret that he had ever laid his hand on Whitefield. "Mark my words, my lord," replied the Countess, "when upon your dying bed, that will be one of the ordinations upon which you will reflect with pleasure." The prediction was fulfilled. The bishop, when he came to die, sent Whitefield a present of ten guineas, and asked an interest in his prayers. Lady Huntingdon, though remotely related to the royal family, and moving in the highest circles of aristocratic life, frequented the Moravian societies in London, and, at the separation of Wesley from them, co-operated with the Methodist party. She invited him to her residence at

Donnington Park, where he often preached. She adopted heartily his doctrine of Christian Perfection. "The doctrine," she wrote him, "I hope to live and die by; it is absolutely the most complete thing I know."* She encouraged him in his extraordinary labours, and especially in the promotion of a lay ministry as the great necessity of the times. Her Calvinistic opinions led her to patronize Whitefield when he separated from Wesley, and her talents, wealth, and influence placed her at the head of Calvinistic Methodism; but she endeavoured to secure a good understanding between the great evangelists. She wrote to each, recommending their closer co-operation, and not without effect. Whitefield preached in Wesley's chapel, Wesley reading the prayers; the next Sunday Wesley officiated at the Tabernacle, assisted by Whitefield, and twelve hundred persons received the Lord's Supper at the conclusion of the sermon. The reconciliation was further strengthened by a powerful sermon to an overflowing assembly at Wesley's chapel the next day, by Howell Harris, the Welsh colabourer of both the great leaders.† Their personal friendship remained uninterrupted during the rest of their lives. "Thanks be to God," wrote the Countess, "for the love and unanimity which have been displayed on this occasion. May the God of peace and harmony, unite us all in the bond of affection."

It is not irrelevant to notice here, though with the anticipation of some dates, the early development of this part of the Methodistic movement. At the death of her husband, Lady Huntingdon devoted her life actively to religious labours, and in 1748 invited Whitefield to preach in her mansion at Chelsea, near London, hitherto a resort for the highest classes of the fashionable and aristocratic world, and she soon after appointed him one of her chaplains. Paul preached privately to those that were of reputation, thought Whitefield; he therefore concurred in her ladyship's proposal to combine with his public labours among the crowds at the Tabernacle, and the ten thousands at Moorfields, private sermons at the Chelsea mansion. Notable men heard there the truth from his eloquent lips. Chesterfield listened to him with delight, and gave him one of his courtly compliments: "Sir, I will not tell you what I shall tell others, how I approve you." He opened for the evangelist his chapel at Bretby Hall, and several of his noble relatives were claimed by Whitefield as his spiritual trophies; his wife and her sister, the Countess Delitz, died in the faith. Horace Walpole heard him with admiration, though his rampant wit trifled with him behind

* Lady Huntingdon Portrayed, chap. iii. New York, 1857.

† Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, vol. i. chap. 8.

his back. Hume listened with wonder, and said he would go twenty miles to hear him. Bolingbroke complimented him, approved his Calvinism, and received his sermons and his visits; his brother, Lord St. John, became a convert, and died in the hope of the Gospel.* Many ladies of the highest aristocratic rank became "devout women," and ornaments to the Christian Church. The Marchioness of Lothian arrived in London in a dying condition about this time, and joined with the Countess of Leven, Lady Balgonie, Lady Frances Gardiner, Lady Jane Nimmo, and Lady Mary Hamilton, in establishing a meeting for prayer and the reading of the Scriptures, to be held alternately at each other's houses, which continued to be well attended and singularly useful for many years. It was confined to a select circle of women of high station, many of whom adorned the doctrine which they professed by a life of holiness and self-denial amid their distinguished associates. Still later, the Countess of Northesk and Hopetown, daughters of Lord Leven, the Countess of Buchan, Lady Maxwell, Lady Glenorchy, Wilhelmina, Countess of Leven (formerly Lady Balgonie), with her sisters, Lady Ruthven and Lady Banff, Lady Henrietta Hope, and Sophia, Countess of Haddington, were devoted members of this select band.† Thus, while Methodism was gathering its societies

* Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, vol. i. chap. 7.

† "These have all long since joined the general assembly and church of the redeemed from among men, and are now uniting in ascriptions of praise to Him who hath redeemed them to God by His blood." (Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, vol. i. chap. 7.) Many flocked from the court circle to the Park Street mansion to hear Whitefield; and, as might be expected, found the truth too novel and keen to be endured. This author (himself "a member of the House of Shirley and Hastings") gives an example which had its parallel almost daily under the Methodist preaching among the lowest classes. "Mr. Whitefield's lectures to the 'brilliant circle' at Lady Huntingdon's were evidently as faithful as they were eloquent. The well-known Countess of Suffolk found them so. Lady Rockingham prevailed on Lady Huntingdon to admit this beauty to hear her chaplain; he, however, knew nothing of her presence; he drew his bow at a venture, but every arrow seemed aimed at her. She just managed to sit out the service in silence, and when Mr. Whitefield retired she flew into a violent passion, abused Lady Huntingdon to her face, and denounced the sermon as a deliberate attack on herself. In vain her sister-in-law, Lady Betty Germain, tried to appease the beautiful fury, or to explain her mistake; in vain old Lady Eleanor Bertie and the Duchess Dowager of Ancaster, both relatives of Lady Suffolk, commanded her silence: she maintained that she had been insulted. She was compelled, however, by her relatives who were present, to apologize to Lady Huntingdon. Having done this with a bad grace, the mortified beauty left the place to return no more." She was the female favourite of the court of George II., and Pope's celebrated "Mrs. Howard."

from the humblest classes, at the Tabernacle and the Foundry, it bound together, in similar assemblies, a few of the "noble" in the aristocratic quarter of the metropolis.

Meanwhile Whitefield's success opened the way for the utmost zeal and liberality of the Countess. She gave away, for religious purposes, more than one hundred thousand pounds.* She sold all her jewels, and by the proceeds erected chapels for the poor. She relinquished her aristocratic equipage, her expensive residences and liveried servants, that her means of usefulness might be more ample. She purchased theatres, halls, and dilapidated chapels in London, Bristol, and Dublin, and fitted them up for public worship. New chapels were also erected by her aid in many places in England, Wales, and Ireland. Distinguished Calvinistic clergymen, Churchmen as well as Dissenters, co-operated with her plans, and were more or less under her direction. Romaine, Venn, Madan, Berridge, Toplady, Shirley, Fletcher, Benson, and a host of others, shared her beneficent labours. She met them in frequent conferences, attended sometimes by the Wesleys. She made tours through parts of England and Wales, accompanied by like-minded noble ladies and by eminent evangelists, who preached wherever they went, in the churches and in the open air. She mapped all England into six districts or circuits, and sent out six "canvassers" from among her most successful adherents, to travel them, and to preach in every community, large or small, which was not pre-occupied by similar labourers; and at the time of her death, her influence had extended over the four sections of the United Kingdom.

Her zeal and munificence provided places of worship faster than they could be supplied by her preachers, especially in Wales. A college for the preparation of clergymen was therefore opened, in a romantic and dilapidated castle of the twelfth century, at Trevecca, the birth-place of Howell Harris, the Welsh evangelist. Its preparation for the purpose exhausted all the available means of the Countess; but Ladies Glenorchy and Chesterfield, with other aristocratic but devout friends, gave her large contributions. Wesley heartily approved her plan. She submitted it also to Fletcher of Madeley; at the close of the day on which he received her letter he retired to his rest in prayerful meditation respecting it. In the dreams of the night the scheme was revolving through his thoughts, and a young man, "James Glazebrook, collier and getter-out of iron-stone in the woods of

* Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, vol. i. chap. 7.

Madeley," appeared as in a vision before him—a suitable student with whom to begin "the school of the prophets." "To my great surprise," wrote Fletcher to the Countess, "he came into Madeley the next morning. I found, upon inquiry, that he was as much drawn to come as I to speak of him." He had been seven years converted, had "no mean gift in singing and prayer," and his "judgment and sense were superior to his station." Such was the first pupil of Trevecca.*

Fletcher himself became its president; and at a later date Joseph Benson, the Wesleyan commentator, was appointed its head master. Students soon flocked to the school. Religious opinions were not made a test for admission; but candidates who professed to have been truly converted to God, and were resolved to devote themselves to the ministry, in either the Established Church or any denomination of Dissenters, were welcomed, and provided, at the Countess's expense, with board, tuition, and a yearly suit of clothes.

Lady Huntingdon's "Connection" holds an important place in the history of these times. It spread the Methodist movement effectively among British Calvinists, whether within or without the Church, and thus contributed inestimably to that general but potent influence which impartial Churchmen and Dissenters acknowledge to have been exerted by Methodism on the whole later progress of religion in Great Britain.† Like Wesley, Lady Huntingdon, with Whitefield, Howell Harris, and most of her preachers, was strongly attached to the Church of England. They wished not to be classed with Dissenters; but in order to

* "Lady Huntingdon Portrayed," chap. viii. Glazebrook became one of Lady Huntingdon's preachers, and subsequently, by the aid of Fletcher and the Countess, obtained ordination in the Established Church. He died vicar of Belton, Leicestershire. He was distinguished for his piety and usefulness, and also for his satirical humour. Works from his pen on extemporary preaching, infant baptism, and other subjects, as also a posthumous volume of sermons, were published. A memoir of him appeared in the "Evangelical Register" in 1836.

† It is significant, however, that Doddridge, Watts, and other great Dissenters in the early times of Methodism, showed publicly but little sympathy with Whitefield, though they acknowledged much privately. They forfeited their right to an honourable place in the history of the new movement. The reason of the fact may be seen in Philip's "Life and Times of Whitefield," chap. x. They were endeavouring to repeat the scheme of "comprehension," which Bates, Manton, and Baxter had attempted in vain with Bishop Stillingfleet. Sympathy towards Methodism might have compromised them with the Establishment, whose favour they were seeking. The facts, as given by Philip, though unfortunate for these great and good men, are irrefutable.

protect her chapels from suppression, or appropriation by the Established Church, she had to avail herself, in 1779, of the "Toleration Act," a law by which all religious societies that would not be subject to the established ecclesiastical power, could control their own chapels by an avowal, direct or virtual, of Dissent. Her "Connection" thus took its place among the Dissenting Churches, and Romaine, Townsend, Venn, and many others of her most influential colabourers belonging to the Establishment, ceased to preach in her chapels.

At the extreme age of eighty-four this remarkable woman died, uttering with her last breath, "My work is done. I have nothing to do but to go to my Father." She left five thousand pounds for charities, and the residue of her fortune for the support of sixty-four chapels, which she had helped to build, in various parts of the kingdom. No one of her sex, perhaps, in the history of the Church, certainly none of modern times, has done more by direct labours and liberality for the promotion of genuine religion.

CHAPTER V.

TRAVELS AND LABOURS OF THE WESLEYS FROM 1741 TO 1744.

Lay Preaching—Thomas Maxfield—Susanna Wesley—Her Death—Wesley Itinerating—Introduction of Class-Meetings—John Nelson—His History—Wesley visits him in Yorkshire—Wesley in the North of England—Newcastle—Its degraded Poor—Wesley Preaching on the Tombstone of his Father—General Rules of the United Societies—Their Catholicity—Physical Phenomena of the Excitement at Newcastle—Wesley considers them Demoniacal—Charles Wesley mobbed at Sheffield—He goes to Cornwall—Is mobbed at St. Ives—John Wesley and John Nelson in Cornwall—Their Privations—Wesley mobbed at Wednesbury—Charles Wesley at Wednesbury—Progress of Methodism.

We have followed Whitefield in his ministerial travels from the date of his separation from Wesley in 1741, to his embarkation for America in 1744. This interval was filled with extraordinary itinerant labours by the Wesleys and their coadjutors, and was followed by a memorable event, the first session of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference.

Notwithstanding the disturbances occasioned by the Calvinistic dispute, and the separation of Whitefield, the year 1742

was attended with increased success. It was, however, a period of severer trials than the Methodist evangelists had hitherto encountered. Methodism had achieved moral miracles among the degraded colliers of Kingswood. It could point for its noblest demonstration to such abysses of popular degradation, into which it had borne the cross, as almost into the gates of hell. Its satirists were compelled to acknowledge its marvellous and salutary power over classes which had been considered hopelessly beyond the reach of any moral influence that either the Church or the Dissenters could then exert. But the lower classes of England generally were sunk in scarcely less degradation, and there were especially other mining regions of the kingdom, as Newcastle and Cornwall, whose demoralization was notoriously extreme. Wesley and his colabourers resolved to invade them at any risk. They knew that in the condition of these districts, at the time, violent opposition must be expected. The magistrates would probably be hostile; the clergy, incapable in their stately churches and formalism of reaching the wretched multitudes, would probably denounce the intruders, a probability which was found to be too true; but what were all such consequences, compared with the results of the continued moral neglect of these perishing masses? The evangelical itinerants directed their course, therefore, towards the mining populations of the north and west, prepared for mobs, and, if need be, for martyrdom. We shall see that they recoiled not from either, but steadily pushed forward their conquests, amid scenes which sometimes resembled the tumults of battle-fields.

Hitherto Wesley's lay "helpers" had been but "exhorters," and readers, and "expounders" of the Scriptures; but "lay preaching" was now formally begun. Thomas Maxfield, occupying the desk of the Foundry in Wesley's absence, had been led to deviate from these restrictions. Wesley received a letter at Bristol informing him of the fact. His prejudices for "church order" were still strong, and he hastened to London, with no little alarm, to check the new irregularity. His mother was still at hand, however, to guide him. Retired in the parsonage of the Foundry, lingering at the verge of the grave, and watching unto prayer over the marvellous developments which were occurring in the religious world around her, through the instrumentality of her family, she read the indications of the times with a wiser sagacity than her son, and was now to accomplish her last controlling agency in the Methodist movement, and to introduce an innovation by which, more than by any other fact in its ministerial

economy, it has been sustained and extended in the world. She perceived on his arrival that his countenance expressed dissatisfaction and anxiety, and inquired the cause. "Thomas Maxfield," he replied, with unusual abruptness, "has turned preacher, I find." She reminded him of her own sentiments against lay preaching, and that he could not suspect her of favouring anything of the kind. But take care, she added, what you do respecting that young man; he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. She counselled him to examine what had been the fruits of Maxfield's preaching, and to hear him also himself. He heard him: "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth to Him good," was all he could further say, and Thomas Maxfield became the first of that host of itinerant lay preachers which has since carried the standard of the Gospel more triumphantly over the world than any other class of the modern Christian ministry.

Maxfield was not the first of Wesley's lay assistants, but the first of his lay preachers. John Cennick and others probably preceded him in the former capacity. Wesley, in his last journal, mentions Joseph Humphries as being the first lay preacher that assisted him "in England, in the year 1738," but doubtless refers to him as an exhorter and expounder, for his scruples in the case of Maxfield prove that he would not have tolerated formal preaching by Humphries at that earlier date; and in the Conference Minutes of 1766 he names Maxfield as the first layman who desired to help him "as a son in the Gospel." "Soon after," he adds, "there came a second, Thomas Richards, and a third, Thomas Westall."

Lady Huntingdon, also, had the good sense to encourage this important innovation. She heard Maxfield, and wrote to Wesley in the warmest terms respecting him. "He is," she said, "one of the greatest instances of God's peculiar favour that I know. He has raised from the stones one to sit among the princes of his people; he is my astonishment; how is God's power shown in weakness!"*

Having lingered till her seventy-third year, counselling and encouraging her sons, and having at last aided in securing the prospects of Methodism indefinitely, if not for all time, by the introduction of a lay ministry, Susanna Wesley died this year on the premises of the Foundry, within sound of the voices of prayer and praise which were ascending almost daily from that memor-

* Moore's Life of Wesley, iv. 3. Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. i. chap. 3. This writer intimates that she induced Maxfield to take this new step.

able edifice—the first Methodist chapel opened in the world, the scene of the organization of the first of the "United Societies," and of the first session of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. It was a befitting place for the departure of the mother of the Wesleys from the church on earth to the church in heaven. She had, says Wesley, no doubt or fear or any desire but to depart and be with Christ.* He and five of her daughters stood around her bed when she expired, on the 23rd of July, 1742. When no longer able to speak, but apparently still conscious, her look, calm and serene, was fixed upward, while they commended her to God in prayer. She died without pain, and at the moment of her departure her children, gathering close around her, sung as she had requested with her last words, "a psalm of praise to God." Followed by an innumerable concourse of people, Wesley committed her remains to the grave, among the many illustrious dead of Bunhill Fields.

Wesley's lay ministry comprised during the year no less than twenty-three itinerants, besides several local preachers.† They were distributed among his increasing societies, and travelled and preached continually in the adjacent towns and villages, he himself affording them in his incessant labours an example which none of them could exceed. He made a rapid tour in Wales during the early part of the year, preaching often in the open air, and assailed by mobs, but was successful in building up and multiplying the societies. He visited Bristol repeatedly, and formed there the first "Methodist class-meeting," and, on returning to London, introduced the same improvement into the metropolitan societies. "This," he says, "was the origin of our classes in London, for which I can never sufficiently praise God. The unspeakable usefulness of the institution has ever since been more and more manifest." The Watch-night was also held this year for the first time in the London congregations.

Under Wesley's first sermon in Moorfields, John Nelson, an honest Yorkshire mason, of extraordinary character and powers of mind, had received the truth, and having returned to his home in Birstal, was now producing no little sensation by his exhortations and prayers among his rustic neighbours. Wesley set out in May for Yorkshire, to visit and direct him.

Nelson had led an upright life from his youth, being trained in steady habits of morality, if not piety, by religious parents.

* Journal, July, 1742.

† Smith's History of Methodism, book ii. chap. 2. Myles's Chronological History of the Methodists, chap. xi.

His faculties were strong, and marked not only by good common sense, but an aptitude to grapple with those agonizing problems respecting the soul and its destiny, evil and good, which the greatest minds can neither solve nor evade. He had a humble but a happy home, a good wife, good wages, good health, and a stout English heart; but though addicted to no immoralities, he was distressed by the sense of moral wants, which his life failed to meet. "Surely," he said, "God never made man to be such a riddle to himself, and to leave him so."* Something he believed there must be in true religion to meet these wants of the soul, otherwise man is more unfortunate than the brute that perishes. Absorbed in such meditations, this untutored mechanic wandered in the fields after the work of the day, discussing to himself questions which had employed and ennobled the thoughts of Plato in the groves of the Cephissus, and agitated by the anxieties that had stirred the souls of Wesley and his studious associates at Oxford. His conduct was a mystery to his less thoughtful fellow-workmen. He refused to share in their gross indulgences; they cursed him because he would not drink as they did. He bore their insults with a calm philosophy; but having as "brave a heart as ever Englishman was blessed with,"† he would not allow them to infringe on his rights; and when they took away his tools, determined that if he would not drink with them he should not work while they were carousing, he fought with several of them until they were content to let him alone in his inexplicable gravity and courage. He went also from church to church, for he was still a faithful Churchman, but met no answer to his profound questions. He visited the chapels of all classes of Dissenters, but the quiet of the Quaker worship could not quiet the voice that spoke through his conscience, and the splendour of the Roman ritual soon became but irksome pomp to him. He tried, he tells us, all but the Jews, and hoping for nothing from them, resolved to adhere steadily to the Church, regulating his life with strictness, spending his leisure in reading and prayer, and leaving his final fate unsolved. Whitefield's eloquence at Moorfields, however, attracted him thither, but it did not meet

* Nelson's Journal.

† Robert Southey, Life of Wesley, chap. xiv. John Nelson's whole life proved that such a eulogy was not undeserved from the biographer of Lord Nelson. The naval conqueror would have admired the evangelical hero, and have acknowledged him his equal in both English courage and English good sense. Southey dilates on the history of John Nelson with much particularity and interest. He was evidently the poet's favourite among the many heroes of early Methodism.

his wants; he loved the great orator, he tells us, and was willing to fight for him against the mob, but his mind only sunk deeper into perplexity. He became morbidly despondent; he slept little, and often awoke from horrible dreams, dripping with sweat, and shivering with terror. Wesley came to Moorfields; Nelson gazed upon him with inexpressible interest as he ascended the platform, stroked back his hair, and cast his eye directly upon him. "My heart," he says, "beat like the pendulum of a clock, and when he spoke I thought his whole discourse was aimed at me." "This man," said he, "can tell the secrets of my breast; he has shown me the remedy for my wretchedness, even the blood of Christ." He now became more than ever devoted to religious duties, and soon found the peace of mind he had so long been seeking. He records, with dramatic interest, the discussions and efforts of his acquaintances to prevent him from going too far in religion. They seem to have been mostly an honest, simple class like himself; they thought he would become unfit for business, and that poverty and distress would fall upon his family. They wished he had never heard Wesley, who, they predicted, would "be the ruin of him." He told them that he had reason to bless God that Wesley was ever born, for by hearing him he had become sensible that his business in this world was to get well out of it. The family with whom he lodged were disposed to expel him from the house, for they were afraid some mischief would come on either themselves or him, from "so much praying and fuss as he made about religion." He procured money and went to pay them what he owed them, and take his leave; but they would not let him escape. "What if John is right and we wrong?" was a natural question which they asked among themselves. "If God has done for you anything more than for us, show us how we may find the same mercy," asked one of them. He was soon leading them to hear Wesley on Moorfields. One of them was made partaker of the same grace, and he expresses the hope of meeting both in heaven.

With much simplicity, but true English determination, he adhered to his religious principles at any risk. His employer required work to be done during the Sabbath on the Exchequer building, declaring that the king's business required haste, and that it was usual, in such cases, to work on Sunday for his majesty. Nelson replied that he would not work on the Sabbath for any man in England, except to quench fire, or something that required the same immediate help. His employer threatened him with the loss of his business. He replied that he would rather

starve than offend God. "What hast thou done that thou makest such an ado about religion?" asked the employer; "I always took thee for an honest man, and could trust thee with five hundred pounds." "So you might," replied the sturdy Methodist, "and not have lost one penny by me." "But I have a worse opinion of thee now than ever," resumed the employer. "Master," replied Nelson, "I have the odds of you there, for I have a much worse opinion of myself than you can have." The honest man was not dismissed nor again asked to work on Sunday, nor were any of his fellow-workmen.

He now wrote to his wife, who was in the country, and to all his kindred, explaining his new method of life, and exhorting them to adopt it. He fasted once a-week, and gave the food thus saved to the poor. He even hired a fellow-workman to hear Wesley; and his liberality was effectual, for the mechanic afterward assured him that it was the best deed, both for himself and his wife, that any one had ever done for them. He read the Scriptures with increased ardour, and was soon abundantly furnished with apt texts for his opponents, and consoling promises for his own inward trials. He had formerly had frightful dreams of contests with Satan, and was usually worsted in the combat; but he now became the victor in these imaginary conflicts. He dreamed that he saw the great adversary rampant among the people, in the form of a red bull; he seized his horns with good courage, threw him upon his back, and trod triumphantly upon his neck.

Such was John Nelson, a man from the lowest rank of English life, but whose brave heart and immoveable integrity fitted him to have taken a place among the noblest martyrs, had he been called to it; and whose fervent piety, steadfast zeal, and Saxon energy, made him one of the apostles of early Methodism. His natural magnanimity, good sense, clear apprehension of Scripture, apt style, and simple manners, rendered him a favourite and successful preacher among a class which few educated clergymen could have reached. A Yorkshireman by birth, he became the chief founder of Methodism in that county, a portion of England in which it has had signal success down to our day.

As his family resided in Birstal, he started, after his conversion, to visit them and his neighbours, that he might recommend to them his new views of religion in person, as he had done in letters. They met him with no little opposition; they could not well consider him a maniac, he had too much good English sense and sobriety for such a suspicion; but he might be under a

strange delusion of the devil! After no little hesitancy, and a vast amount of rustic polemics, his two brothers, an aunt, and two cousins yielded, and became his disciples. He sat in his own house reading, exhorting, and praying with such of his neighbours as came to hear. The number increased so much that he had soon to stand at the door and address them without and within. Six or seven were converted weekly; the ale-houses were deserted, and the moral aspect of the whole town was changed.* His exhortations became more topical as the inquiries of his hearers became more specific, and soon, without anticipating it, he was addressing them in formal discourses. He had, in fact, become a preacher, and his sermons, from being quite private, had become public, and were attended with such extensive results that Wesley started from London, as we have seen, to visit and direct him.

On arriving at Birstal, Wesley was surprised to find a society and a preacher awaiting him. He addressed them and hundreds of others on the top of Birstal Hill. He recognized Nelson as one of his "helpers," and his band of rustic followers as one of his United Societies. Methodism thus took root in Birstal, and has since spread into every village of Yorkshire.

The Moravians, with their London errors, thronged about the sturdy mason, and perverted many of his converts; but he himself was more than a match for them, with his apt quotations of Scripture. His sound though untutored mind could not be seduced by their sophistries.

Wesley had not hitherto visited the North of England. Leaving Nelson, with full confidence in his steadfast discretion and further success, he hastened to Newcastle, one of those degraded mining regions which Methodism proposed to invade the present year. He walked into the town, and never, he says, had he witnessed so much drunkenness, cursing, and swearing, from the mouths of little children as well as adults, in so short a time. "Surely," he exclaimed, "this place is ripe for Him who 'came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.'" †

* Wesley says (Short History of the People called Methodists, sect. 20): "Many of the greatest profligates in all the country were soon changed; their blasphemies were turned to praise. Many of the most abandoned drunkards were now sober; many Sabbath-breakers remembered the Sabbath to keep it holy; the whole town wore a new face. Such a change did God work by the artless testimony of one plain man! And from thence his word sounded forth to Leeds, Wakefield, Halifax, and all the West Riding of Yorkshire."

† For our citations from John Wesley throughout this chapter, see his Journals, 1742-3-4.

At seven o'clock on Sunday morning he walked down to Sandgate, the most degraded part of the town, and standing at the end of the street with a religious friend, began to sing the Hundredth Psalm. Three or four persons came out to see what was the matter; they soon increased to four or five hundred; before he had closed twelve or fifteen hundred stood around him. He discoursed to them, as usual when he addressed the vicious poor, on one of the most consolatory texts: "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." When he had concluded, the wretched multitude, who had never before had the offers of the Divine compassion thus brought to them in their very streets, stood, he writes, "gaping and staring" upon him with astonishment. "If you desire to know who I am," he cried, "my name is John Wesley; at five in the evening, with God's help, I will preach here again." At five o'clock the hill upon which he designed to preach was covered from top to bottom. He says he never saw such a multitude, either in Moorfields or at Kennington Common. He knew that one-half could not hear him, though he had them all in range of his view, as he stood at the apex of the living pyramid. It was an occasion to inspire such a man. The "south had not kept back;" it seemed now that "the north was about to give up" to the little band which had so lately commenced its march from the gates of Oxford, and had already spread its evangelical triumphs in England, Wales, and America. His text was again a proclamation of mercy, for these poor multitudes, he believed, were not the worst of sinners; he knew that under their rude and boisterous vices were hidden crushed but living consciences; longings for better things; generous sensibilities that would respond to the voice of God or man whenever they could hear it speaking to their wants and sorrows. "I will heal their backslidings; I will love them freely," were the gracious words which he shouted to them. The effect justified his wisdom. After hearing his message of mercy, the "poor people," he says, "were ready to tread me under foot out of pure love and kindness." It was some time before he could make his way out of the eager throng. He had to escape by another street than that by which he came, but, on reaching his inn, he found that several of his hearers had got there before him. They vehemently entreated him to stay with them at least a few days, or, if that could not be, yet only one day more; but he could not; he had promised to be with Nelson again immediately, and was compelled to leave

them clamouring around him for the bread of life. His brother came among them in a short time, and before the year closed Wesley again visited them; he saw their degradation more thoroughly than before; he found, he writes, that he had got into the very Kingswood of the north. Twenty or thirty "wild children" ran around him as soon as he entered the Common to preach. He describes them as neither clothed nor naked. "One of the largest (a girl about fifteen) had a piece of a ragged, dirty blanket some way hung about her, and a kind of cap on her head, of the same cloth and colour." He was deeply affected by the sight of his miserable audience, and they looked, he says, as if they would have "swallowed him up," especially while he was applying to them the words: "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins." He immediately began the erection of a chapel among them. One of those "Societies" which he had providentially found ready for him in London, Bristol, and other towns, had maintained a lingering existence in Newcastle. It now became the nucleus of Methodism there, and a profound but remarkably tranquil religious interest spread through the surrounding regions. "I never saw," he writes, "a work of God in any other place so evenly and gradually carried on; it continually rises, step by step." Instances, however, of excitement, and its physical effects, afterward appeared at Newcastle, as at other places, and required the exercise of his best prudence.

On his return he passed rapidly through many towns, preaching daily. He stopped at an inn in Epworth, the parish of his father and his own birthplace. The curate, who was a drunkard, refused him the pulpit. David Taylor, Lady Huntingdon's servant, was with him, and announced, as the congregation retired from the church, that Wesley would preach in the graveyard in the afternoon. He accordingly stood upon his father's tombstone, and preached to such a congregation as Epworth had never seen before. For one week he daily took his stand above the ashes of his father, and "cried aloud to the earnestly attentive congregations." He must have deeply felt the impressive associations of the place, but paused not to record his emotions. His one great work of preaching, preaching day and night, seemed wholly to absorb him. His hearers, however, felt the power of his word and of the scene. God bowed their hearts, he says, and on every side, as with one accord, they lifted up their voices and wept; several dropped down as dead. A gentleman came to hear him who boasted that he was of no religion, and had not been in a

church for thirty years. The striking scene of the churchyard could probably alone have brought him to hear Wesley. He was smitten under the sermon, and when it was ended stood like a statue, looking up to the heavens. Wesley asked: "Are you a sinner?" "Sinner enough," he replied, with a broken voice, and remained gazing upward till his friends pressed him into his carriage and took him home. Ten years later Wesley saw him, and was agreeably surprised to find him strong in faith, though fast failing in body. For some years, he said, he had been rejoicing in God without either doubt or fear, and was now waiting for the welcome hour when he should depart and be with Christ.

Wesley found in Epworth an old servant of his father, and several poor people, who had adopted the Methodistic views, and were living by faith, and he organized societies throughout a wide circuit of neighbouring towns, in which he preached daily before the hour of his evening sermons at his father's tomb. These societies were mostly composed of the lowest people; but such salutary effect had Methodism on their daily lives as to commend it often to the respect of the higher classes, and almost everywhere a few of "the noble" shared its blessings.*

The foundations of Methodism had now been laid in much of the land. Societies were springing up in all directions; Classes were generally introduced among them; itinerant lay preachers were multiplying; chapels had already been built in Bristol, London, Kingswood, and Newcastle. It became obvious that better defined terms of membership were necessary for the growing societies. Wesley, therefore, in consultation with his brother, formed the memorable "General Rules of the United Societies," a document which has become a part of the constitutional law of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America. It defines the "United

* While on his present visit to Epworth, he says he rode over to a neighbouring town to wait upon a justice of the peace, a man of candour and understanding, before whom their angry neighbours had carried a whole waggon-load of these new heretics. But when the magistrate asked what they had done there was a deep silence, for that was a point their conductors had forgot. At length one said: "Why, they pretend to be better than other people; and, besides, they pray from morning till night."

The justice asked: "But have they done nothing besides?"

"Yes, sir," said an old man; "an it please your worship, they have *converted* my wife. Till she went among them she had such a tongue, and now she is as quiet as a lamb."

"Carry them back! carry them back!" replied the magistrate, "and let them convert all the scolds in the town."

Wesley's Journal abounds with similar facts.

Society" to be "no other than a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness; united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation." Members are required to be distributed into classes, about twelve to each class, one of whom is styled the leader. He is to meet them once a-week for religious inquiry and conversation, and for the collection of their contributions toward the expenses of the Society, reporting the result to the preacher and stewards regularly. But one condition is previously required of such as wish admission to the classes—"a desire to flee the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins;" but this desire is to be shown, first, *by doing no harm;* by avoiding evil in every kind, especially that which is most generally practised; such as taking the name of God in vain; profaning the Sabbath, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling; drunkenness, buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity; fighting, quarrelling, brawling, brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; using many words in buying or selling; buying or selling uncustomed goods; giving or taking things on usury; uncharitable or unprofitable conversation, particularly speaking evil of magistrates or of ministers; doing to others as they would not have others do unto them, and doing what they know is not for the glory of God; as the putting on of gold, or costly apparel; the taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus; the singing those songs, or reading those books that do not tend to the knowledge or love of God; softness, and needless self-indulgence; laying up treasure on earth; borrowing without a probability of paying, or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them. Secondly, the sincerity of their profession was to be shown *by doing good*, by being in every kind merciful after their power, as they had opportunity; doing good of every possible sort, and as far as possible to all men; to their bodies, of the ability that God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping the sick, and prisoners; to their souls, by instructing, reproving, or exhorting all they had any intercourse with; *trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine of devils, that we are not to do good unless our hearts be free to it;* by doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others; buying one of another; helping each other in business, and so much the more, because the world will love its

own, and them only; by all possible diligence and frugality, that the Gospel may not be blamed; by running with patience the race that was set before them, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ; to be as the filth and offscouring of the world, and expecting that men should say all manner of evil of them falsely for the Lord's sake. Thirdly, by attending on all the ordinances of God, such as public worship, the ministry of the Word, either read or expounded, the Lord's Supper, family and private prayer, searching the Scriptures, and fasting or abstinence. "These," add the two brothers, "are the general rules of our societies; all which we are taught of God to observe, even in His written Word, the only rule both of our faith and practice; and all these we know His Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observes them not, who habitually breaks any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul, as they must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways; we will bear with him for a season. But then if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls."

Such was the original platform of Methodism. It comprises not one dogmatic statement, nor hardly what could be called an ecclesiastical requisition. All earnest inquirers after religious truth and spiritual purification throughout the world could approve it with scarcely a qualification. It was a purely catholic and apostolic expression of Christianity. At a later date Wesley exclaims in his Journal: "Oh that we may never make anything more or less the term of union with us, but the having the mind that was in Christ, and the walking as He walked."*

During the year 1743 Wesley repeated his excursions to Wales, and also to the north of England. He visited Epworth, and again preached on the tomb of his father. He was now not only denied the pulpit but even the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. He was again with Nelson at Birstal, and returned thence to London, proclaiming his message at Sheffield, Wednesbury, Stratford-on-Avon, Evesham, and Bristol. On the 14th of February he directed his course toward the north, and in five days was preaching at Newcastle, where he found that his previous visit had left a wide-spread sensation. He perceived, in visiting the adjoining towns, the necessity of reducing his "itinerancy" to a more methodical arrangement, and "resolved not to strike one stroke in any place where he could not follow

* Journal, September 29, 1745.

the blow;" thence sprung up his regular "circuit system," which was subsequently extended to the labours of all his assistants.

While at Newcastle he made a special investigation of the remarkable physical effects which now occurred there, as elsewhere, under his preaching. He found, first, that all persons who had been thus affected were in perfect health, and had not before been subject to convulsions of any kind. Second, that these new affections had come upon them in a moment, without any previous notice, while they were either hearing the preaching, or thinking of what they had heard. Third, that they usually dropped down, lost their strength, and were seized with violent pain. Their feelings they described differently. Some said they felt as if a sword was running through them; others thought a great weight lay upon them, as if it would press them into the earth. Some said they were quite choked, and found it difficult to breathe, that their hearts swelled ready to burst; others that the whole body seemed rending to pieces. These symptoms he still attributed to a preternatural agency. "I can no more impute them," he writes, "to any natural cause than to the Spirit of God." But they were not divine; they were demoniacal; "it was Satan tearing them as they were coming to Christ."* His journal abounds in candid records of such phenomena; and the curious who would study these extraordinary effects (repeated so often in our own day) for the purpose of discovering a physiological or any other solution of them, can find no better data than he records.

Charles Wesley, who attached less importance to these marvels, subsequently found, at Newcastle, that the propensity to morbid imitation, which played so many and even epidemic follies in the ecclesiastical history of the Middle Ages, had not a little to do with them. He also detected among them some deliberate counterfeits. One, who came drunk from an ale-house, was pleased, he writes, to fall into a fit for his entertainment, and beat himself heartily. Wesley thought it a pity to hinder him, and, instead of singing over him, as had often been done, left him to recover at his leisure. A young woman began to cry aloud; he ordered her to be carried away; her convulsions were so violent as to deprive her of the use of her limbs, till they laid and

* As late, however, as 1781, when he published his Short History of the People called Methodists, he gives an important qualification to this opinion. "Satan," he says, "*mimicked* this part of the work of God, in order to discredit the whole, and yet it is not wise to give up this part any more than to give up the whole." Wesley seemed always to be puzzled by these problems; his opinions respecting them were throughout his life vague if not contradictory.

eft her without the door. She there immediately found her trength and walked off. Some very unquiet women, who always ook care to stand near him, and try which should cry loudest, ecame as "quiet as lambs" when removed out of his sight. The first night he preached in the town half his words were lost hrough their outcries. Before he began on another evening, he gave public notice that whoever cried so as to drown his voice hould, without any man's hurting or judging them, be gently arried to the farthest corner of the room. His porters had no mployment during the meeting; "yet," he writes, "the Lord vas with us, mightily convincing of sin and righteousness."*

John Wesley returned to his lay fellow-labourer, Nelson, at Birstal, and going with him to Leeds, preached his first sermon n that great centre of northern Methodism.† A society had lready been formed there, probably by John Nelson himself.

On Wesley's return to Bristol, his brother set out for the north, reaching in almost every town on his route, and was repeatedly eset by ferocious mobs. At Wednesbury he found that Methodism vas accomplishing its salutary work among the colliers. More than hree hundred had been reformed and gathered into the society, vhile others raged against the itinerants, like untamed beasts of he forest. He walked with his Wednesbury brethren to Walsall, inging as they went; but as they passed through the streets of he latter place, they were hailed by the shouts of the rabble. He took his stand on the steps of the market-house, where a host f excited men rallied against him, and bore down like a flood to weep him away. Stones flew fast and thick. Many struck vithout hurting him. He kept his ground till he was about to lose his discourse, when the raging stream bore him from the teps. He regained them, and was pronouncing the benediction, vhen he was again swept down; but a third time he took his osition, and returned thanks to God, after which he passed hrough the midst of the rioters, menaced on every hand, but ntouched.

He went to Sheffield, where worse scenes awaited him. He ays: "Hell from beneath was moved to oppose us." As soon s he was in the desk, "the floods began to lift up their voice." A military officer contradicted and blasphemed, but the preacher ook no notice of him, and sang on. Stones were thrown, hitting he desk and people. To save them and the house, he gave notice hat he should preach out of doors, and look the enemy in the

* Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley, chap. x.
† Smith's History of Methodism, book ii. chap. 2.

face. The whole army of aliens followed me," he says; their leader laid hold of him and reviled him; he gave the enraged soldier "A Word in Season, or Advice to a Soldier," one of the tracts of his brother; he then prayed particularly for the king, and preached on amid the contention, though often struck in the face by stones. After the sermon he prayed for sinners as servants of their master, the devil, upon which the officer ran at him with great fury, threatening revenge for his abuse, as he called it, of the king, his master. He forced his way through the crowd, drew his sword, and presented it to the preacher's breast. Wesley threw open his vest, and fixing his eye on his assailant, calmly said, "I fear God, and honour the king." The captain's countenance fell in a moment; he put up his sword and quickly retreated from the scene. Wesley returned to the house of a friend; but the rioters followed, and exceeded in their outrage anything he had seen before. Those of Moorfields, Cardiff, and Walsall, were lambs, he says, compared to these. They resolved to pull down the preaching-house, "and they set to their work," he writes, "while we were praying and praising God. It was a glorious time with us. Every word of exhortation sunk deep, every prayer was sealed, and many found the Spirit of glory resting on them." The mob pressed hard to break open the door. Wesley would have gone out to them, but his brethren would not suffer him. The rabble raged all night, and by morning had pulled down one end of the house. "Their outcries often waked me in the night," he writes; "yet I believe I got more sleep than any of my neighbours." This disgraceful tumult he ascribes to sermons preached against the Methodists by the clergy of Sheffield.

The next morning he was expounding at five o'clock, and later the same day he preached in the heart of the town. The mob shouted from afar, but troubled him not. On returning to his lodging, he passed the ruins of the chapel; not one stone remained upon another. The rioters again rallied, and following him, smashed in the windows of his lodging, and threatened to tear down the dwelling, but the preacher, fatigued and courageous, fell asleep "in five minutes in the dismantled room." "I feared no cold," he writes, "but dropped asleep with that word, 'Scatter thou the people that delight in war.'" Charles Wesley often acknowledged himself to have been constitutionally a timid man, but his religious feelings made him heroic whenever danger menaced him in the path of duty.

The next morning at five o'clock he counselled and comforted

the little company of his brethren, and went on his way to other labours and perils. He saluted John Nelson at Birstal, and proclaimed his message in that and neighbouring towns to many thousands. He preached in the streets at Leeds, and found there a society of fifty members. At Newcastle, Sunderland, Shields, and other places, his labours were successful, and he returned to London, nothing daunted by the stormy trials he had encountered.

Though bold as a lion in perils, Charles Wesley was not only naturally timid, but subject, like most men of poetic sensibility, to attacks of melancholy. He found a relief in activity, and in a short time was again on his route from London to Cornwall. Pausing to preach at Bristol, Exeter, and Bodmin, he arrived by the middle of July at St. Ives, which had become the centre of Methodism in the west. One of those societies which had been formed in London before the date of Methodism, had been kept up in the town, and opened the way for the Methodist evangelists. A lay "helper" was at hand to receive him. The mob was also waiting for him here, and in several neighbouring places. At St. Ives the chapel was attacked, its windows smashed in, its seats torn up, and the fragments borne away, with the shutters, poor-box, and all but the stone walls. Wesley stood silently looking on. They swore bitterly that he should not preach there again, an assertion which he immediately disproved by proclaiming that Christ had died for them all. Several times they lifted their hands and clubs to strike him, but an unseen arm restrained them. They beat and dragged about the women, particularly one of a great age, and trampled on them without mercy. Wesley bade the people stand still, and see the salvation of God, resolving to continue with them until the end of the strife. After raging about an hour, the ruffians fell to quarrelling among themselves; broke the head of the town-clerk, who was their captain, and drove one another out of the room. "Having kept the field, the society gave thanks for the victory."

The converted miners were a courageous class, and were unappalled by these trials. The next day Wesley writes: "I cannot find one of this people who fears those that can kill the body only." Some of their bitterest persecutors were won by their meek endurance, and became standard-bearers of the Cross among them.

Similar assaults were made in other places. At Pool a drunken hearer attempted to drag the preacher from his stand, and a churchwarden, heading the rabble, drove him and his con-

gregation out of the parish. The church record bears to this day an entry of expenses at the village inn for drink to the mob and its leader, for driving out the Methodists.* Several weeks, however, did Charles Wesley pursue his labours successfully in almost every part of West Cornwall. Thousands heard the Word amid the din of riots; hundreds from the most degraded classes were converted into devout Christians and exemplary citizens, and Cornwall has since become the most successful arena of Methodism in England. Nowhere, perhaps, in the world has it more strikingly demonstrated its beneficent power over the common people.

Soon after the return of Charles Wesley from Cornwall, John Wesley arrived there, accompanied by Nelson. They found about a hundred and twenty members in the society at St. Ives. Nelson worked during the day at his trade, and at night aided Wesley and Shepherd, another lay assistant, in preaching among the population of the peninsula of West Cornwall. Methodism had not yet penetrated into many of the villages, and the itinerants sometimes suffered for want of the common comforts of life. Nelson relates, in characteristic style, examples of these hardships. "All this time," he says, "Mr. Wesley and I lay on the floor; he had my greatcoat for his pillow, and I had Burkitt's Notes on the New Testament for mine. After being here nearly three weeks, one morning, about three o'clock, Mr. Wesley turned over, and finding me awake, clapped me on the side, saying, 'Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer; I have one whole side yet, for the skin is off but one side.' We usually preached on the commons, going from one common to another, and it was but seldom any one asked us to eat or drink. One day we had been at St. Hilary Downs, where Mr. Wesley preached from Ezekiel's vision of dry bones, and there was a shaking among the people while he preached. As we returned, Mr. Wesley stopped his horse to pick the blackberries, saying, 'Brother Nelson, we ought to be thankful that there are plenty of blackberries, for this is the best country I ever saw for getting a stomach, but the worst that ever I saw for getting food. Do the people think we can live by preaching?' I said: 'I know not what they may think; but one asked me to eat something as I came from St. Just, when I ate heartily of barley bread and honey.' He said: 'You are well off; I had a thought of begging a crust of bread of the woman where I met the people at Morvah, but forgot it till I had got some distance from the house.'"†

* Smith's History, book ii. chap. 2. † Nelson's Journal.

Such were not uncommon privations among the primitive Methodist itinerants of both hemispheres. No clergymen, however, fare better than have Methodist preachers in Cornwall since that day; and even then, wherever the common people were gathered into the new societies, they were ready to share all they possessed with the devoted men who brought to their mines and hovels the bread of life. They received the Gospel with a heartiness and devotion which have never been surpassed. Wesley records that on the morning which was to close his present visit, he was waked between three and four o'clock by a group of miners, who, eager for the five o'clock sermon, were waiting and singing hymns beneath his windows.

Leaving Nelson to supply the societies, Wesley made rapid visits to Bristol and Wales, and returned again to the north. At Wednesbury he was attacked by an overwhelming mob of colliers and others. He was pushed along in their midst from one magistrate to another within, and two miles beyond, the town, during several hours of the night, and under a pelting storm of rain. These guardians of the peace were in bed, and refused either to hear or to disperse the mob. A second crowd from Walsall came down upon the first, and, dispersing it, bore him off. A stout woman, who had headed the first mob, now tried to rally them for his defence, and swearing that none should touch him, ran in among the new assailants, and knocked down three or four men one after another, but was soon herself overpowered. The Walsall rabble pressed him from one end of the town to the other. In descending a steep and slippery part of the road an attempt was made to throw him down; had it been successful, he would probably have been trodden to death. One of the female members of the society was thrown into the river. A strong man behind Wesley aimed several blows with an oak bludgeon at the back of his head. One of them would probably have been fatal, but they were all turned aside, Wesley says, he knows not how. He was struck by a powerful blow on the chest, and by another on the mouth, making the blood gush out; but felt no more pain, he affirms, from either than if they had touched him with a straw; not certainly because he was over-excited or alarmed, for he assures us that from the beginning to the end he was enabled to maintain as much presence of mind as if he had been sitting in his study, but his thoughts were entirely absorbed in watching the movements of the rioters. The noise on every side, he says, was like the roaring of the sea. Many cried: "Knock his brains out! down with him! kill him at once!

crucify him!" "No, let us hear him first," shouted others. He at last broke out aloud into prayer. The ruffian who had headed the mob, a bear-garden prizefighter, was struck with awe, and turning to him, said: "Sir, I will spend my life for you; follow me, and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head." Several others now rallied for his protection. An honest butcher cried out for him, and laying hold bravely on four or five of the most violent of the rioters, thrust them away. The people fell back, as if by common consent, and, led on through their opened ranks by their champion, he safely escaped to his lodgings.

Notwithstanding the manifest usefulness of Methodism to the lower classes of the English population, proved in the reformation of hundreds of them at Wednesbury, as elsewhere, the clergy and magistrates favoured the mob. The former had instigated it, and the latter refused to suppress it. The Methodists of the town had endured intolerable wrongs before the riot reached this frightful crisis. Women and children had been knocked down and dragged in the gutters of the streets; their houses had been attacked, their windows broken, their furniture demolished.* Such was the condition of English society in that day, that the rioters were assembled by the blowing of a horn, and virtually usurped the control of the laws for nearly half a year. They drew up a form of recantation, which they declared all Methodists should sign; and those who refused to do so were beaten, and placed in peril of their lives. Wesley, with his usual courage and sagacity, had gone to Wednesbury to confront this formidable opposition. He knew that if Methodism were of God, it had a mission to perform towards these colliers, and their long-neglected and brutalized class throughout the land; that in approaching them it would unavoidably provoke such hostilities, and that its only policy was to meet and conquer them till it should open a clear field for itself among the lower classes generally. No man could have less natural disposition for what some might deem the ministerial heroism or romance of such adventures than he. The scholar, the accomplished divine, the well-bred gentleman, fastidiously nice, even, in matters of apparel and personal manners, these scenes of popular derision and ruffianism must have been most repugnant to him. He certainly never had the fanatical folly to court them, but he never feared them. Calm in temper, keen in sagacity, and apposite in remark, he knew how to meet them.

* Many Methodist families in Wednesbury still preserve fragments of furniture as precious memorials of the sufferings of their fathers. Watson's Life of Wesley, chap. vii.

He had come to Wednesbury expressly to do so in this instance, and he succeeded. The mob had yielded, and its very leaders had become his defenders. A less sagacious man would have supposed it well to remain on the field now that he had won it; but Wesley left the next morning. He knew that though the mass had been conquered, the fermentation in some minds had not yet entirely subsided, and might easily again break out; but that a few days of delay and town-talk over the sufferings of the Methodists, and the cool bearing of their leader, could not fail to promote the favourable turn which the popular feeling had taken towards them. He therefore rode away the next day, but passed through the town, and says that, "every one I met expressed such cordial approbation that I could scarce believe what I saw and heard."

He went to Nottingham, where Charles Wesley was preaching. "He looked," says the latter, "like a soldier of Christ. His clothes were torn to tatters." Charles soon after visited Wednesbury to comfort the persecuted society. He found its members assembled, nothing terrified by their adversaries, and preached to them from, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith; quit yourselves like men; be strong." "Jesus," he says, "was in the midst, and covered us with a covering of his Spirit. Never was I before in so primitive an assembly. We sang praises lustily, and with a good courage, and could all set our seal to the truth of our Lord's saying: 'Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake.' We laid us down and slept, and rose up again. We assembled before day to sing hymns to Christ, as God." As soon as it was light he walked down into the town and preached boldly on, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "It was," he says, "a most glorious time; we longed for our Lord's coming to confess us before His Father and His holy angels. We now understood what it was to receive the Word in much affliction, and yet with joy in the Holy Ghost."

He received several new members into the society, and among them was the late captain of the mob. This depraved man was not without generous feelings; he had been constantly in deep religious contrition since the night on which he had attacked and rescued Wesley. Charles asked him what he thought of his brother. "Think of him," said he; "that he is a *man* of God;

and God was on his side when so many of us could not kill one *mon.*" * Thus did Methodism pluck "brands from the burning," and lift them up before the astonished mobs and magistrates as its best trophies.

John Wesley was soon again in Newcastle, and the remainder of the year was spent in undiminished labours. The persecutions which broke out in many places increased the popular interest in the new movement and aroused the energy of its labourers. The year closed with forty-five itinerants in the field, besides many local preachers. Societies had sprung up in many of the principal towns; their membership cannot be ascertained, but it must have included many thousands. There were more than two thousand in London alone. † Wesley saw that a great work had begun; that it could not fail to affect the whole kingdom if it went on, and that it was now no time to succumb before mobs or any other difficulties. Mobs, he knew, could not last long; the laws, if nothing else, must sooner or later suppress them, and they could only result in greater impetus to the new movement. They afforded the most conclusive proof of the moral degradation of the common people, and therefore the best justification of the extraordinary efforts by which Methodism attempted to awaken the inert conscience of the land. Stedfast perseverance in these efforts was what the times required; with Wesley that could never be wanting, and it could never fail among his subordinate labourers while their leader bore their standard courageously forward. The next year was to open with new "fights of affliction," but with still greater victories.

* Wesley's Journal, anno 1743. Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. x.
† Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. xi.

CHAPTER VI.

EVENTS OF 1744: THE FIRST WESLEYAN CONFERENCE.

Reports against Wesley—Terrible Mobs in Staffordshire—Charles Wesley among the Rioters—John Wesley in Cornwall—Scenes at St. Ives—Wesley preaching at Gwennap—John Nelson—His Power over the Mob—He is impressed for the Army—Characteristic Incidents—Thomas Beard, the Protomartyr of Methodism—The First Wesleyan Conference—Its Proceedings—Its Policy—Lady Huntingdon—Ministerial Education approved—Wesley's Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion.

THE year 1744 was to be signalized in the history of Methodism not only by the first session of the Wesleyan Conference, but by formidable trials. Before the Conference Wesley made rapid excursions into various parts of England and Wales. The country was in general commotion, occasioned by threatened invasions from France and Spain, and by the movements of the Scotch Pretender. Reports were rife that the Methodist preachers were in collusion with the Papal Stuart. All sorts of calumnies against Wesley flew over the land. He had been seen with the Pretender in France; had been taken up for high treason, and was at last safe in prison awaiting his merited doom. He was a Jesuit, and kept Roman priests in his house at London. He was an agent of Spain, whence he had received large remittances, in order to raise a body of twenty thousand men to aid the expected Spanish invasion. He was an Anabaptist; a Quaker; had been prosecuted for unlawfully selling gin; had hanged himself; and, at any rate, was not the genuine John Wesley, for it was well known that the latter was dead and buried. That he was a disguised Papist, and an agent for the Pretender, was the favourite slander; and when a proclamation was made requiring all Roman Catholics to leave London, he stayed a week in the city to refute the report. He was summoned by the justices of Surrey, to appear before their court, and required to take the oath of allegiance to the king, and to sign the Declaration against Popery. Charles Wesley was actually indited before the magistrates in Yorkshire, because in a public prayer he had besought God to "call home his banished ones." This, it was insisted, meant the House of the Stuarts; and he had to explain, at the tribunal, the purely spiritual meaning of the phrase, before he was acquitted.

Mobs raged, meanwhile, in many places. In Staffordshire the

Methodists were assailed not only in their assemblies, but in the streets, and in their homes. At Walsall the rioters planted a flag in public and kept it flying during several days. In Darlaston women were knocked down, and abused in a manner, says Wesley, too horrible to be related.* Their little children, meanwhile, wandered up and down, no neighbour daring to take them in lest he should hazard his own life. Houses were broken into, and furniture destroyed and thrown out into the street. One of the Methodists says that he was denied shelter in his own father's dwelling, the latter fearing it would be torn down. Charles Wesley, as we shall hereafter see, could, at a later date, distinguish the houses of Methodists by their "marks of violence," as he rode through the town. In Wednesbury the disorders were again frightful; and for nearly a week the mob reigned triumphant. They were gathering all Monday night, and on Tuesday began their riotous work, sanctioned, if not led on, by gentlemen of the town. They assaulted, one after another, all the houses of those who were called Methodists. They first broke the windows, suffering neither glass, lead, nor frames to remain. Then they made their way in, and all the tables, chairs, chests of drawers, with whatever was not easily moveable, they dashed in pieces, particularly shop goods and furniture of every kind. What they could not well break, as feather beds, they cut in pieces, and strewed about the room. The wife of a Methodist was lying-in, but that was nothing; they pulled away her bed and cut it in pieces. Wearing apparel and things which were of value or saleable were carried away, every man loading himself with as much as he could well bear of whatever he liked best. All this time none offered to resist him. Men and women fled for their lives; only the children remained, not knowing whither to go. Some of the gentlemen who had instigated these dreadful scenes, or threatened to turn away collier or miner from their service if he did not take part in them, now drew up a paper for the members of the society to sign, importing that they would never invite nor receive any Methodist preacher again. On this condition it was promised that the mob should be checked at once, otherwise the victims must take what might follow. The pledge was offered to several; but the faithful sufferers declared, one and all, "We have already lost all our goods, and nothing more can follow but the loss of our lives, which we will lose too, rather than wrong our consciences."

The mob divided into several companies, and marched from

* Journal, anno 1744.

village to village within a range of four or five miles, and the whole region was in a state little short of civil war.

Wesley was justly indignant to find these outrages described the next week, in the London newspapers, as perpetrated by the Methodists themselves, who, "upon some pretended insults from the Church party," had risen in "insurrection" against the Government. He hastened from London to sustain the persecuted societies in the riotous districts, for it was his rule, he wrote, "always to face the mob." At Dudley he learned that the lay preacher had been cruelly abused at the instigation of the parish minister; the peaceable itinerant would probably have been murdered, had not an honest Quaker enabled him to escape disguised in his broad-brimmed hat and plain coat.* At Wednesbury he found none of the magistrates willing to protect the Methodists. One of these functionaries declared that their treatment was just, and offered five pounds to have them driven out of the town. The spirit of the converted colliers was rising, and Wesley had difficulty in restraining them from self-defence. One of the magistrates refused to hear a Methodist who came to take oath that his life was in danger. Another delivered a member of the society up to the mob, and waving his hand over his head, shouted, "Huzza, boys! well done! stand up for the Church!" The sound of family worship in the evening was the signal for breaking into the Methodist houses. At Walsall Charles Wesley found "the enemy's head-quarters;" the flag of the rioters waved in the market-place. He passed to Nottingham, and there also the war had begun. The Methodists were driven from the chapel, and pelted in the streets. They would have avenged their wrongs had it not been for the restraining efforts of another good Quaker. The mayor passed by laughing, while Charles Wesley was preaching at the town-cross amid flying missiles from the mob. At Lichfield "all the rabble of the county was gathered together, and laid waste all before them;" not one, however, of the Methodists "had resisted evil; they took the spoiling of their goods joyfully." At Sheffield and Thorpe he found the mob had relented, and the societies enjoyed rest. At the latter place a persecutor had died in despair, and the rabble had been appalled into quiet. Some of them had even joined the society. At Wakefield and Leeds he learned that the Methodists had been excluded from the Lord's Supper at the parish churches. At Birstal he found John Nelson's hill quite covered with hearers; in the midst of his discourse a gentleman "came riding up, and

* Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley, chap. xi.

almost over the people." Speaking of temperance and judgment to come, Wesley turned and said, "'Thou art the man.' His countenance fell, and he fled before the sword of the Spirit. The power of God burst forth, and a cry was heard throughout the congregation."

He pursued his way to Newcastle, where disturbances were also breaking out. Taking his stand in the public square, he proclaimed, "Ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake." He afterwards found a "great mob" at the chapel, and "spending an hour in taming them," exhorted them for two hours more. "The rocks," he says, "were melted on every side, and the very ringleaders of the rebels declared they would make a disturbance no more." The next day, however, the storm raged again among another class. The people had given themselves up to drunkenness, in honour of a supposed victory of the British over the French.* They thronged about the chapel, struck several of the brethren, and threatened to pull down the pulpit. He afterwards learned that at the same hour the chapel at St. Ives was pulled down. At Epworth he met on the common a lay preacher, Thomas Westall, who was driven away from Nottingham by "the mob and mayor." Wesley immediately preached to the panic-struck society and the noisy crowd on the text, "Enter into the rock, and hide yourselves as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." As he passed through Birstal again the mob was tearing down John Nelson's house, but fled away as Wesley and his companions approached with singing. He returned to London, and collected funds for the relief of the persecuted societies. Some of his finest lyrics were composed during his travels amid these tumults. He often recited and sometimes sung them among the raging crowds. Four of them were written "to be sung in a tumult," and one was a "prayer for the first martyr;" it was soon to be found appropriate.

The storm meanwhile swept over Cornwall also. The chapel at St. Ives was entirely destroyed. John Wesley went thither; and on arriving at the home of one of the Methodists, where the society was waiting for him, he was received, he writes, "with a loud though not bitter cry; but they soon recovered, and we poured out our souls together in praises and thanksgivings." As

* Such was the state of English morals at this period, that drunkenness was a fashionable vice. Nearly thirty years later Johnson said to Boswell: "I remember when all the *decent* people in Lichfield [Johnson's native town] got drunk every night, and were not thought the worse for it." Boswell's Johnson.

soon as they went out they were saluted with huzzas, stones, and dirt. He was agreeably surprised at the Christian meekness and patience with which the converted miners, once degraded and violent men themselves, now endured persecution for righteousness' sake. Some of those who had been the worst of the rabble, had become the most exemplary sufferers. He records that "the Methodists of St. Just had been the chief of the whole country for hurling, fighting, drinking, and all manner of wickedness; but many of the lions had become lambs, and were continually praising God, and calling their old companions in sin to come and magnify the Lord together." Such had been the general state of religion in the country, that many intelligent men could not comprehend these changes. They were anomalies and madness to them. One of the clergy in Cornwall, a person, says Wesley, of unquestioned sense and learning, and a doctor of divinity, some of whose most abandoned parishioners had been reclaimed, asked a devout Methodist "who had been made the better by this preaching?" "The man before you," was the reply; "one who never before knew any work of God in his soul." "Get along," cried the learned divine; "you are all mad, crazy-headed fellows," and seizing him by the shoulders thrust him out the door.

On the public fast-day, appointed for the safety of the nation against the menaced invasion, Wesley listened to a sermon in the Church of St. Ives, in which the Methodists were denounced as enemies of the Church and State, Jacobites, and Papists. But the sun of the same day went down upon him, as he stood controlling the troubled elements at Gwennap. "I stood," he says, "on the wall, in the calm still evening, with the setting sun behind me, and almost an innumerable multitude before, behind, and on either hand. Many likewise sat on the little hills, at some distance from the bulk of the congregation. But they could all hear distinctly while I read; 'The disciple is not above his Master,' and the rest of those comfortable words which are day by day fulfilled in our ears."*

Thus did he maintain his ground: to retreat, was to abandon

* The Gwennap amphitheatre must have presented a grand spectacle on such occasions; an engraving representing Wesley preaching there is extant; in the latter part of his life, aged, and venerated by the people, he still occupied it for preaching at his annual visits. "I think," he wrote, "this is one of the most magnificent spectacles which is to be seen on this side heaven." The Methodist singing there especially was sublime to him. "No music," he said, "is to be heard on earth comparable to the sound of many thousand voices," as he there heard them, "all harmoniously joined in singing praises to God and the Lamb."

this demoralized populace to its moral wretchedness; to persevere, he knew would conquer its turbulence in spite of the influence of the clergy. He did persevere, and at last won the well-deserved victory. Methodism prevailed through all Cornwall, and in his old age his journeys through its towns and villages were like "royal progresses," or triumphal marches. The descendants of those who mobbed him crowded his routes, and filled the steps, balconies, and windows, to see and bless him as he passed;* and in our day Cornwall witnesses in all its towns and hamlets, to the power of the Gospel as preached by Wesley and his persecuted itinerants.

After spending three weeks in the west he went to Epworth, where he found that one of his preachers, John Downes, had been impressed as a soldier, and placed in Lincoln jail. An "inexpressible panic," he says, prevailed in all places. He passed to Birstal, the home of John Nelson, but there learned that this heroic man had also been seized for the army, and carried off to prison. Soon after he heard that Thomas Beard, another assistant, had shared the same fate.

John Nelson had been travelling about the land, working by day and preaching at night. His good sense, cool courage, sound piety, and apt speech, secured him success wherever he went. He had spread out Methodism extensively in Yorkshire, Cornwall, Lincolnshire, Lancashire, and other counties. He was a man of such genuine spirit and popular tact that his worst opposers usually became his best friends, and the rudest men delighted to hear him. He passed through Wednesbury soon after the terrible riots there, and preached in the open air. The mob came, but would not molest him. At Nottingham several persons tried to throw squibs into his face and at his feet while he was preaching, but others threw them back; and a sergeant in the army came to him with tears, and said: "In the presence of God and all this people I beg your pardon, for I came on purpose to mob you; but when I could get no one to assist me I stood to hear you, and am convinced of the deplorable state of my soul; I believe you are a servant of the living God." "He then kissed me," says Nelson, "and went away weeping."† No evidence could better prove the power of the artizan preacher. He journeyed on to Grimsby, where the parish clergyman hired a man to beat the town drum, and went before it, gathering together the rabble, and giving them liquor to go with him and "fight for the Church." When they came to Nelson's lodgings, they set up

* Watson's Life of Wesley, chap. vii. † Nelson's Journal.

three huzzas, and their clerical leader cried out to them to pull down the house; but no one offered to touch it till Nelson had done preaching; they then broke the windows, leaving not one whole square of glass in the building. The people were assailed as they went out, but the mob began to fight one another, and thus allowed the preacher and his hearers to escape. Not long after the minister gathered the rioters together again, and gave them more drink. They then came and broke the stanchions of the windows, pulled up the paving in the streets, threw the stones into the house, and demolished its furniture; but they again quarrelled among themselves, and dispersed after five hours of tumult. The clergyman, who was a representative of a large class of his profession at that day, hired the town drummer to disturb the evangelist again the next morning; but after beating his drum around the congregation for three-quarters of an hour, he yielded under Nelson's eloquence, threw away the drum, and stood listening with the tears running down his cheeks. Such was the power of this extraordinary man over his rudest hearers.

He went to Epworth; both the clerk and clergyman of that parish were drunkards; the former ran, as Nelson was preaching in the open air, and cried to the congregation to make way that he might reach the itinerant and carry him before his master, who was at the village ale-house. The people stood up, however, for the eloquent mason, and bade the clerk hold his peace and go about his business. He chose to become still ruder, when a sturdy yeoman took him up and threw him on a dung-hill.

At Pudsey the people were afraid to admit him to their houses, as they had heard that constables were searching for him. Nelson sat upon his horse in the street and exhorted them. "The Lord," he assured them, "would build the walls of Jerusalem in these troublesome times." He passed on to Leeds, where he "kept hewing stone day by day and preaching every night." The Methodists of Leeds may justly boast of him as their founder and apostle. On reaching his home at Birstal, he was met with warnings that he should be impressed for the army if he did not immediately escape. The ale-house keepers complained of the loss of their customers by his preaching, and the parish clergyman wished not such a rival near him. "I cannot fear," said the brave Yorkshireman—"I cannot fear, for God is on my side and his Word hath added strength to my soul this day." He was seized the next day while preaching at Adwalton. He was much esteemed among his fellow-townsmen, and one of them offered five hundred pounds bail for him, but it was refused, and he was

marched off to Halifax, where the Birstal vicar was on the bench as one of the commission. Nelson's neighbours came to bear witness for him, but the commissioners declined to hear any other than their clerical associate, who reported him to be a vagrant, without visible means of living. Nelson, who had always been an industrious workman, repelled the charge manfully. "I am as able to get my living by my hands," he said, "as any man of my trade in England is, and you know it." He was ordered to Bradford. On leaving Halifax many of the common people wept and prayed for him as he passed through the streets. "Fear not," he cried to them; "God hath His way in the whirlwind, and He will plead my cause; only pray for me that my faith fail not." At Bradford he was plunged into a dungeon, into which flowed blood and filth from a slaughter-house above it, so that it smelt, he says, "like a pig-sty; but my soul," he adds, "was so filled with the love of God that it was a paradise to me." There was nothing in it to sit on, and his only bed was a heap of decayed straw. But even there his manly spirit won him friends; a poor soldier wished to become responsible for him; and an opposer of the Methodists offered security for him that he might be allowed to sleep in a bed. The people offered him food, water, and candles through a hole in the door, and stood outside joining him in hymns most of the night. He shared their charities with a miserable fellow-prisoner, who might have starved had it not been for his kindness.

Nelson's excellent wife came to him early the next morning, and showed that she was worthy of him. She had two young children to provide for, and expected soon another, but addressing him through the hole in the door, said: "Fear not; the cause is God's for which you are here, and He will plead it Himself. Therefore be not concerned about me and the children, for He that feeds the young ravens will be mindful of us. He will give you strength for your day; and after we have suffered awhile He will perfect what is lacking in our souls, and bring us where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

"I cannot fear," responded the brave man; "I cannot fear either man or devil so long as I find the love of God as I now do."

The next day he was sent to Leeds. Multitudes flocked to see him, and he thought, he says, of the "Pilgrim's Progress," for hundreds of people in the street stood and looked at him through the iron gate, and were ready to fight about him. Several

would have bailed him out. A stranger offered a hundred pounds security, but it was refused. At night a hundred persons met in the jail, and joined him in worship. In a short time he was marched off to York, where violent hostility prevailed against the Methodists. While he was guarded through the streets by armed troops, it was, he says, as if hell was moved from beneath to meet him at his coming. The streets and windows were filled with people, who shouted and huzzaed as if he had been one who had laid waste the nation. "But," he adds sublimely, "the Lord made my brow like brass, so that I could look upon them as grasshoppers, and pass through the city as if there had been none in it but God and me." Here he was again sent to prison, but ceased not to admonish the officers and others about him whenever they swore, and they often shrank before his word and his glance. He was ordered to parade. The corporal who was commanded to give him a musket, and gird him with his military trappings, trembled as if he had the palsy. Nelson said he would wear them "as a cross," but would not fight as it was not agreeable to his conscience, and he would not harm his conscience for any man on earth. He reproved and exhorted all who approached him. At one time "a great company" gathered to see him, and wished to hear his opinions. He preached to them, and they retired, declaring "this is the doctrine which ought to be preached, let men say what they will against it." Before long he was preaching in the fields and the streets, and no remonstrances of his officers could stop him. He replied to them always with respectfulness, but with an invincible though quiet firmness.

He was subjected to maltreatment, which his brave spirit would have resented had it not been for his Christian principles. A stripling ensign, especially, took pleasure in tormenting him. This officer had him put in prison for reproving his profanity and for preaching, and when he was let out threatened to chastise him. Nelson records that "it caused a sore temptation to arise in me, to think that a wicked, ignorant man should thus torment me, and I able to tie his head and heels together. I found an old man's bone in me; but the Lord lifted up a standard, when anger was coming on like a flood, else I should have wrung his neck to the ground and set my foot upon him."

He was at last released by the influence of Lady Huntingdon with the Government, after having been marched about the country with his regiment for nearly three months. He immediately resumed his labours as a good soldier of the Lord Jesus. On the night of his discharge he was preaching at Newcastle; several of

his military comrades came to hear him, and parted from him with tears. We shall meet him again amid severer scenes, but always sublime in the calmness, simplicity, and courage of his noble nature.

Thomas Beard, his fellow-evangelist, had also been his fellow-sufferer in the regiment, and met a sadder fate. He maintained a brave spirit under his sufferings, but his health failed. He was sent to the hospital at Newcastle, "where," says Wesley, "he still praised God continually." His fever became worse and he was bled, but his arm festered, mortified, and had to be amputated. A few days later he died, the protomartyr of Methodism.*

It is not surprising that the scholarly mind of Wesley sometimes revolted from such scenes. "I found," he writes, "a natural wish, O for ease and a resting-place! Not yet, but eternity is at hand." Amid these very agitations he was planning for a still more energetic prosecution of the great work which was manifestly henceforth to occupy his life. He wrote letters to several clergymen, and to his lay assistants, inviting them to meet him in London, and to give him their "advice respecting the best method of carrying on the work of God."† And thus was called together the *first Methodist Conference* on Monday, the 25th of June, 1744. It was held in the Foundry, London. On the preceding day, the regular clergymen and lay preachers who had responded to the call took the Lord's Supper together. On the morning of the first session Charles Wesley preached before them.‡ Besides the Wesleys there were present four ordained ministers of the Church of England: John Hodges, rector of Wenvo, Wales, a friend and co-labourer of the Wesleys in the principality, who not only opened his own pulpit to them, but accompanied them in their different routes and out-door preaching; Henry Piers, the vicar of Bexley, a convert of Charles Wesley, and whose pulpit and home were ever open to him and his brother; Samuel Taylor, vicar of Quinton, whose church the Wesleys always occupied when passing through that parish, and who himself was known as an itinerant evangelist; and John Meriton, a clergyman from the

* Wesley refers to him in his Journal, 1744, with much feeling, and quotes the lines:

> "Servant of God, well done! well hast thou fought
> The better fight; who singly hast maintained
> Against revolted multitudes, the cause
> Of God, in word mightier than they in arms."

Charles Wesley wrote two of his best hymns on the death of Beard.

† The Large Minutes. See also Wesley's Works.

‡ Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. xi.

Isle of Man, who itinerated extensively in both England and Ireland.* It has usually been supposed that these six regular clergymen composed the first Wesleyan Conference.† There were present, however, from among the lay preachers, Thomas Maxfield, Thomas Richards, John Bennett, and John Downes.‡

The Conference being opened, regulations were immediately adopted for its own government. They were marked by the simplicity and purely evangelical character with which the Methodistic movement had thus far been characterized, and also by that charitable freedom of opinion which it has ever since been at least an indirect tendency of Methodism to promote. "It is desired," said these good men, "that everything be considered as in the immediate presence of God, that we may meet with a single eye, and as little children who have everything to learn; that every point may be examined from the foundation; that every person may speak freely what is in his heart, and that every question proposed may be fully debated and 'bolted to the bran.'" It was a question formally proposed, How far does each agree to submit to the unanimous judgment of the rest? The answer is worthy of perpetual remembrance. "In speculative things each can only submit so far as his judgment shall be convinced; in every practical point, so far as we can, without wounding our several consciences." Should they be fearful, it was asked, of thoroughly debating every question which might arise? "What are we afraid of? Of overturning our first principles? If they are false, the sooner they are overturned the better. If they are true, they will bear the strictest

* Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. xi.

† Jackson commits this mistake. (Life of Charles Wesley, chap. xi.) The error arises from the fact that the names of the lay preachers present were not given in the current Minutes. Wesley's first edition of the Minutes of his Conferences was issued in Dublin, about five years after this session. He published them in two pamphlets, one containing the deliberations of the sessions on doctrinal subjects, the other, discussions of matters of discipline. The first was afterward comprised in the current Minutes, and was supposed to contain the only remaining record of the early conferences. The second was entitled the "Disciplinary Minutes." Its existence was forgotten until both tracts were found, bound with a copy of the early hymn-book, at a London book-stall, by Rev. Joseph Hargreaves, from whom they came into the hands of Dr. George Smith, who has made important use of them in his History of Methodism (book ii. chap. 3). There can be no doubt of the genuineness of this interesting document. Its internal evidence is conclusive. Its value to the Methodist historian is inestimable, as it gives information of Conferences respecting which we have no other account whatever.

‡ "Disciplinary Minutes." Smith's History of Methodism, book ii. chap. 3.

examination. Let us all pray for a willingness to receive light to know every doctrine whether it be of God." *

Having settled its own regulations, the conference suspended its business for an interval of prayer, after which it proceeded to consider, first, What to teach; second, What to do, or how to regulate the doctrine, discipline, and practice of the ministry and the Society. These propositions comprehended the scope of its further deliberations. The first two days were spent in discussions of the theology necessary to be maintained in their preaching; and the whole record of the debate vindicates the representation already made † of the disposition of the Methodist founders to avoid unnecessary Dogmatics, by confining their instructions to those vital truths which pertain to personal religion. Repentance, Faith, Justification, Sanctification, the Witness of the Spirit were defined with precision. No other tenets were discussed except as they were directly related to these.

On the third, fourth, and fifth days, questions of discipline and methods of preaching were examined. The relations of the Methodist Societies to the Church of England were considered. Secession from the Establishment was discountenanced, but evidence was given that Wesley's opinions of "church order" had already undergone a liberal improvement. To the question, How far is it our duty to obey the bishops? the answer is, "In all things *indifferent;* and on this ground of obeying them, we should observe the Canons as far as we can with a safe conscience." Intimations are given in the "Disciplinary Minutes" of a classification of the Methodists of that day, which was doubtless very speedily changed, for, besides the United Societies and Bands, there were "Select Societies" and "Penitents," phrases which seldom or never afterwards appear in Methodist records. The rules of the United Societies and also of the Bands were approved. The suggestions of the Conference on the "best general method of preaching" were excellent for the lay preachers. They were: 1. To invite; 2. To convince; 3. To offer Christ; lastly, To build up; and to do this in some measure in every sermon. Very precise rules were prescribed for lay assistants.

* Minutes of the Methodist Conferences, from the first held in London, by the late Rev. John Wesley, A.M., in the year 1774; vol. i. London: 1812. As the Minutes of the first Conference were not published till 1749, they include some proceedings which took place at other sessions prior to this date. When it is important that their chronological order should be observed, I refer them to their real dates, as shown in the "Disciplinary Minutes," according to Dr. Smith's quotations.

† See book i. chap. i.

Wesley was still, however, reluctant to encourage a lay ministry. To the question whether lay assistants are allowable? the Minutes reply, "Only in cases of necessity." He was yet hopeful that the clergy of the National Church would be so generally reached by the extending revival as to supersede that necessity. "We believe," say these Minutes, "that the Methodists will either be thrust out or will leaven the whole Church." The assistants were instructed to preach against Formality. The questions, "Is it lawful to bear arms?" and "Is it lawful to use the law?" were decidedly affirmatively.

It is a fact of peculiar interest to the advocates of ministerial education among Methodists, that as early as this, the first Conference of the denomination, their views were asserted by their great founder, and apparently without a dissent from his associates. It was formally asked, "Can we have a seminary for labourers?" Methodism was not yet sufficiently mature, especially in its finances, for the important design; the answer was, therefore, "If God spare us till another Conference." Accordingly, at the next session it was asked, "Can we have a seminary for labourers yet?" "Not till God gives us a proper tutor," was the reply.* The inquiry was made at subsequent Conferences, and never abandoned till it was effectively answered by the establishment of the present two well endowed "Theological Institutions" in England, and the two "Biblical Institutes" in America. Methodism, like the "Great Reformation," commenced its work within a university, and has always, in its public capacity, zealously promoted useful knowledge and educational institutions. Objections to even theological education have been comparatively modern and mostly personal.

During the session all the Conference were received at Lady Huntingdon's mansion in London, for the Countess still considered Methodism a common cause. Wesley preached there from a befitting text: "What hath God wrought?" Piers, of Bexley, and Hodges, of Wenvo, took part in the service; while Maxfield, Richards, Bennett, and Downes, sat around them, recognized as genuine, though unordained ambassadors of Christ. This was the first of those household sermons which afterwards, under Whitefield, gave to her ladyship's residence in London the character of a chapel.

On Friday the little band dispersed, to proclaim again their

* Watson's Wesley, chap. ix. "Wesley looked to Kingswood school," says Watson, "as subsidiary to this design," . . . "so that the institution was actually resolved upon, and delayed only by circumstances."

message through the country. They made no provision for future sessions; they apparently had no definite conceptions of the great work in which they found themselves involved, except the suggestion of their spiritual faith, that God would not allow it to come to naught without first morally renovating the churches of the land. Any organic preparations for its future course would probably have interfered with the freedom and efficiency of its development. History teaches that men raised up for great events are usually endowed with wisdom and energy for their actual circumstances, and seldom effect momentous changes on hypothetical schemes; and that even the constitutions of states are best when they arise from gradual growths. Great men are God's special agents, and they are not only good, but great, in proportion as they are co-workers together with Him, using to the utmost their present resources, and trusting the result to His foreseeing wisdom. Such an anticipation of the result as might fit them intellectually to forecast it, might unfit them morally to achieve it. We behold with admiration the prodigious agency of Luther in the modern progress of the world, but we can hardly conceive that he could have anticipated it without being thereby morally disqualified for it. Most of the practical peculiarities of Methodism would have been pronounced impracticable if suggested before the exigencies which originated them. To have supposed that hundreds of thousands of the common people could be gathered, and kept from year to year, in weekly class-meetings, for direct conversation and inquisition respecting their personal religious experience, and that such a fact should become the basis of one of the most extended forms of English Protestantism; that a ministry for these multitudes could be raised up among themselves, a ministry without education, many of its members, according to their critics, eccentric, and predisposed to enthusiasm, if not fanaticism, and yet kept from doctrinal heresies; that they could be trained to habits of ministerial prudence and dignity, and to the most systematic methods of evangelical labour known in the modern church; that with uncertain salaries, and generally with severe want, they should devotedly adhere to their work; that generation after generation they should consent to the extraordinary inconveniences of their ministerial itinerancy, to be torn up with their families every two or three years from their homes and churches, and despatched they knew not whither —such unparalleled measures, proposed beforehand, would have seemed, to thoughtful men, preposterous dreams. Yet more than a hundred years have shown them to be not only practicable, but

effective beyond any other contemporary means of religious progress. That Wesley did not seek to anticipate the wants of Methodism, except in the most obvious instances, was both a reason and a proof of his practical ability to meet them when they came.

In this year he published his "Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion." It is mostly a defence of the opinions and practice of the Methodists. It is eloquently written, and appeals, with justifiable confidence, to the striking results which had already attended the Methodistic movement. "Behold," he writes, "the day of the Lord has come! He is again visiting and redeeming his people. Having eyes, see ye not? Having ears do ye not hear, neither understand with your hearts? At this hour the Lord is rolling away our reproach. Already His standard is set up. His Spirit is poured forth on the outcasts of men, and His love shed abroad in their hearts. Love of all mankind, meekness, gentleness, humbleness of mind, holy and heavenly affections do take the place of hate, anger, pride, revenge, and vile or vain affections. Hence, wherever the power of the Lord spreads, springs outward religion in all its forms. The houses of God are filled; the table of the Lord is thronged on every side; and those who thus show their love of God, show they love their neighbour also, by being careful to maintain good works, by doing all manner of good, as they have time, to all men. They are likewise careful to abstain from all evil. Cursing, Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, with all the (however fashionable) works of the devil, are not once named among them. All this is plain, demonstrable fact. I insist upon the fact; Christ is preached, and sinners are converted to God. This none but a madman can deny. We are ready to prove it by a cloud of witnesses. Neither, therefore, can the inference be denied that God is now visiting his people."

Of the objections to the Methodists he says: "This only we confess, that we preach inward salvation, now attainable by faith. And for preaching this (for no other crime was then so much as pretended) we were forbid to preach any more in those churches where, till then, we were gladly received. This is a notorious fact. Being thus hindered from preaching in the places we should first have chosen, we now declare the 'grace of God which bringeth salvation in all places of His dominion;' as well knowing that God dwelleth not only in temples made with hands. This is the real, and it is the only real ground of complaint against us. And this we avow before all mankind, we do preach

this salvation by faith. And not being suffered to preach it in the usual places, we declare it wherever a door is opened, either on a mountain, or a plain, or by a riverside (for all which we conceive we have sufficient precedent), or in prison, or, as it were, in the house of Justus, or the school of one Tyrannus. Nor dare we refrain. 'A dispensation of the Gospel is committed to me; and woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.'"

Of the conduct of the National clergy, as contrasted with that of the Methodists, he says: "Which of you convinceth us of sin? Which of you (I here more especially appeal to my brethren, the clergy) can personally convict us of any ungodliness or unholiness of conversation? Ye know in your own hearts (all that are candid men, all that are not utterly blinded with prejudice) that we 'labour to have a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man.' Brethren, I would to God that in this ye were even as we. But indeed (with grief I speak it) ye are not. There are among yourselves ungodly and unholy men; openly, undeniably such; drunkards, gluttons, returners of evil for evil, liars, swearers, profaners of the day of the Lord. Proof hereof is not wanting, if ye require it. Where then is your zeal against these? A clergyman, so drunk he can scarce stand or speak, may, in the presence of a thousand people (at Epworth, in Lincolnshire), set upon another clergyman of the same Church, both with abusive words and open violence. And what follows? Why, the one is still allowed to dispense the sacred signs of the body and blood of Christ; but the other is not allowed to receive them, because he is a field-preacher. O ye pillars and fathers of the Church, are these things well-pleasing to Him who hath made you overseers over that flock which He hath purchased with His own blood? O that ye would suffer me to boast myself a little! Is there not a cause? Have ye not compelled me? Which of your clergy are more unspotted in their lives, which more unwearied in their labours, than those whose 'names ye cast out as an evil,' whom ye count 'as the filth and offscouring of the world?' Which of them is more zealous to spend and be spent for the lost sheep of the house of Israel? Or who among them is more ready to be offered up for their flock 'upon the sacrifice and service of their faith?'"

BOOK III.

PROGRESS OF METHODISM FROM THE CONFERENCE OF 1744 TO THE CONFERENCE OF 1750.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE CONFERENCE OF 1744 TO THE CONFERENCE OF 1745.

Charles Wesley in Cornwall—Triumphs of Methodism—John Wesley preaches for the last time before the University of Oxford—Winter itinerancy—Impressment and Imprisonment of Preachers—Meriton—Bennet—Maxfield—Wesley arrested—He is mobbed at Falmouth—Success in Cornwall and Wales—John Nelson itinerating—He conquers his Persecutors—Methodism in the British Army in Flanders—John Evans—John Haime—Samson Staniforth—Mark Bond—Remarkable Scenes in the Battle of Fontenoy—Triumphant Deaths of Methodist Soldiers—Deaths of Haime and Staniforth.

The Conference of 1744 had no sooner adjourned than Charles Wesley, accompanied by another of its members, the Rev. John Meriton, from the Isle of Man, set out for Cornwall. The storm of persecution which had broken upon that region rendered it necessary that one of the Wesleys should be frequently present to comfort and advise the societies. On the arrival of the travellers at Middlesey they met John Slocomb, a young lay preacher who had just escaped from the fate of Nelson, Beard, and Downes, having been imprisoned as a vagrant and impressed for the army. After being detained some time he was brought before the Commissioners, who not only found no just charge against him, but discovered also that he was of too small a stature, too nearly "a Zaccheus," for the military rules, and allowed him to resume his Christian labours. He became a useful itinerant preacher, and, many years later, John Wesley mentions him as falling in the work at Clones, Ireland, "an old labourer worn out in the service of his Master."*

* Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. xii.

As they entered Cornwall they found that the field in the West had yielded a rich harvest. On arriving at Gwennap, Wesley writes: "Here a little one has become a thousand; what an amazing work has God done in one year! The whole country is alarmed, and gone forth after the sound of the Gospel; in vain do the pulpits ring of Popery, and madness, and enthusiasm. Our preachers are daily pressed to new places, and enabled to preach five or six times a-day. Persecution is kept off till the seed takes root. Societies are springing up everywhere, and still the cry from all sides is, 'Come and help us.'" Methodism had produced in all parts of Cornwall a manifest improvement in the moral condition of the people. Many who had not joined the societies had, nevertheless, abandoned their gross vices. "The whole country," continues Wesley, "is sensible of the change." At the preceding assizes there was a "jail delivery," but not one felon was to be found in the prisons, a fact which he informs us was unknown before in the memory of man. At their last public revel enough men could not be rallied to make a wrestling match, "all the Gwennap men being struck off the devil's list, and found wrestling against him, not for him." When he took his leave of the reclaimed populace of this town, they came forth by thousands to the field-preaching, covering all the green plain and hills of the natural amphitheatre; "they hung," he says, "upon the Word of life." He spake for three hours, yet knew not how to stop. "Such sorrow and love as they there expressed the world will not believe, though a man declared it unto them." With much difficulty he was able at last to make his way through them, and pass on his journey; and several of his hearers, women as well as men, kept pace with the horses for two or three miles of the road, then "parted in body, not in mind."* The miners came out unwashed from their subterranean dens, some still to oppose, but most by this time to welcome and hear him. At Crowan he preached to between one and two thousand, who "seemed started out of the earth; several hid their faces and mourned inwardly, being too deeply affected to cry out." "The poor people," he added, "were ready to eat us up, and sent us away with many a hearty blessing." The storm of persecution had lulled everywhere. Even at St. Ives, where the chapel lay in ruins, the societies had rest, and welcomed him with grateful tears. At St. Just he found more than two hundred converts gathered into the classes. "Our Lord," he wrote, "rides on triumphant through

* His beautiful and affecting lyric, "Naomi and Ruth, adapted to the Ministry and People," was suggested by this scene.

this place." The parish church itself had become crowded with Methodist hearers. At Morvah he found a hundred and fifty in the society, and a chapel commenced. The Gospel had broken the ranks of the mob, hosts of rioters had become Methodists; and at Gulval he received into the society one who had been the greatest persecutor in all Cornwall.

Still accompanied by Meriton, he left Cornwall for Wales, where they travelled and preached several days. Returning by way of Bristol and Kingswood, and proclaiming the Word daily as they journeyed, they reached Oxford, where they met John Wesley and Henry Piers, another clerical member of the late Conference. An interesting event drew them to this celebrated seat of learning, the scene of the early studies and first labours of the Methodist founders, and where they had received the derisive name which they were to render honourable throughout the religious world. According to usage it was John Wesley's turn, as a Fellow of Lincoln College, to preach before the University, and as it would probably be the last opportunity of the kind allowed him, his friends gathered there to witness the occasion. It was the season of the races. Oxford was crowded with strangers, and Wesley's notoriety as a field preacher excited a general interest to hear him. Such was the state of morals at the time, that clergymen, gownsmen, and learned professors shared, with sportsmen and the rabble, the dissipations of the turf. Charles Wesley went in the morning to the prayers at Christchurch, and found men in surplices talking, laughing, and pointing, as in a playhouse, during the whole service. The inn where he lodged was filled with gownsmen and gentry from the races. He could not restrain his zeal, but preached to a crowd of them in the inn court-yard. They were struck with astonishment, but did not molest him. Thence he went to St. Mary's Church, with Meriton and Piers, to support his brother in his last appeal to their Alma Mater. Wesley's discourse was heard with profound attention. The assembly was large, being much increased by the races. "Never," says Charles Wesley, "have I seen a more attentive congregation. They did not let a word slip them. Some of the heads of colleges stood up the whole time, and fixed their eyes on him. If they can endure sound doctrine like his he will surely leave a blessing behind him. The vice-chancellor sent after him and desired his notes, which he sealed up and sent immediately. We walked back in form, the little band of us four, for of the rest durst none join us." Wesley's sermon on this occasion has been published. It is entitled "Scriptural Christi-

anity," and is a calm and able discussion of the subject, and of the means of diffusing genuine religion over the land. It concludes with a close, and powerful, but dignified application to the university dignitaries, to the fellows, tutors, and under-graduates, referring distinctly, but not invidiously, to the prevalence of formality and worldliness among them, and to the decay of Scriptural piety throughout the Church. In his journal of that day he says: "I preached, I suppose, the last time at St. Mary's! Be it so. I am now clear of the blood of these men. I have fully delivered my own soul." It was St. Bartholomew's day, and failed not of suggestive memories. He was well pleased, he says, that it should be the very day on which, in the preceding century, near two thousand burning and shining lights were put out at one stroke; "yet what a difference is there between their case and mine," he adds; "they were turned out of house and home, and all that they had, whereas I am only hindered from preaching, without any other loss, and that in a kind of honourable manner, it being determined that when my next turn to preach comes they would pay another person to preach for me."* This they did twice or thrice, till, in fine, he resigned his Fellowship. Such was the treatment he received from the university, to which he has given more historical importance than any other graduate of his own or subsequent times, and more perhaps than any other one ever will give it.†

The same day he left the venerable town, the scene of so many of his early reminiscences; left it with his final testimony, to pursue his apostolic career among the ignorant and neglected populace, and before the day closed was preaching again at Wycomb.

Methodism had extended over England from Land's End to Newcastle, and Wesley was now continually traversing the country, establishing order and discipline among the new societies, and preaching two, and often three sermons daily, beginning almost invariably at five o'clock in the morning. The latter part of the year he spent in the north, amid the severities of an unusual winter. Turnpikes were then unknown in that section of England, and the snows were deep. He and his itinerant com-

* Short History of the People called Methodists, section 30.

† The legislators of England have ordered a statue of Wesley to adorn the walls of the new Parliament House; Oxford still declines him any honourable recognition. Such is the difference of progress between Church and State in England. Parliament has had in our day its Peel, Oxford its Pusey.

panions were often compelled to walk, leading their horses. "Many a rough journey," he says, "have I had before, but one like this I never had, between wind, and hail, and rain, and ice, and snow, and driving sleet, and piercing cold; but it is past; those days will return no more, and are therefore as though they had never been." His brother passed through similar trials during this inclement season; unable to ride on the obstructed roads, and sometimes too chilled and enfeebled to walk. They relaxed not their energy, however; every city, town, and village they considered their parish, and wherever they were delayed their work went on.

They had also to brave severer trials. In most of the localities where riotous persecutions had prevailed, the societies were now enjoying comparative rest; but mobs broke out in other places, and several of the lay preachers were driven from their fields, and some imprisoned. Meriton, accompanied by a youthful itinerant, was interrupted while preaching at Shrewsbury, by a constable, who seized the young man to impress him for the king's service. Meriton himself was imprisoned, and his companion escaped only by running from street to street, and finally taking refuge at a private house, where he was compassionately locked up in a closet till midnight, when, disguised in female dress, he made his way out of the town, passing sentinels who were appointed to watch for him on the bridge.

John Bennet, another itinerant, was "impressed" with three of his lay brethren in Cheshire. His good courage and prudence disheartened his persecutors, and they released him, but his companions had to stand a legal trial. Thomas Maxfield and seven or eight members of the Society at Crowan were seized for the army. He was sent in a boat to Penzance, thrust into a dungeon, and offered to the commander of a ship of war then in Mount Bay, but the officer was shrewd enough to know that such a recruit would be of questionable service on shipboard. "I have no authority," he said, "to take such men as these, unless you would have me give them so much a week to preach and pray." A humble Cornish preacher was pulled down by a constable while preaching at Corlam, and borne off to the House of Correction at Bodmin. A warrant was got out for John Wesley himself in Cornwall. He was taken into custody, but his persecutors were surprised to find him a gowned clergyman and a well-bred gentleman. Instead of conducting him to the magistrate, they escorted him with awkward politeness to his inn, with a promise to call for him the next day. They took good care, however, to trouble him no more. He

took his stand the same evening in the open air at Gwennap, and while preaching to a great assembly, three gentlemen, so called, rode furiously into the crowd shouting, "Seize him! seize him for His Majesty's service!" The people would not obey them, but sang a hymn. Many of them were struck meanwhile by the infuriated riders. One of the horsemen seized Wesley by the cassock, and dismounting dragged him away by the arm. In a short time he perceived that he was dealing with no fanatic, but a gentleman and scholar, and insisting that he meant no harm, requested Wesley's company at his own house. Wesley declined the dubious politeness. His persecutor then ordered a horse for each of them, and drove back with the preacher to the place whence he had taken him.*

The next day a more serious scene awaited him at Falmouth. An innumerable multitude assailed the dwelling where he was staying. A louder or more confused noise, he says, could hardly occur at the taking of a city. The terrified family escaped, leaving only Wesley and a servant-maid in the house. The rabble forced open the door, and filled the passage. Only a wainscot partition remained between them and their victim. Wesley, supposing the wall would soon fall, showed his coolness at the moment by taking down a large looking-glass which hung against it. The mob, with terrible imprecations, began to attack the partition. "Our lives," he says, "seemed hardly worth an hour's purchase." The servant entreated him to hide himself in a closet. "It is best," he replied, "for me to stand just where I am." The crews of some privateers, which had lately arrived in the harbour, were in the street, and being impatient at the slow progress of the rioters within, drove them out, and undertook the assault themselves. Putting their shoulders against the door, and shouting, "Avast, lads! avast!" they prostrated it upon the floor of the room. Wesley stepped forward immediately into their midst, bareheaded, and said: "Here I am. Which of you has anything to say to me? To which of you have I done any wrong? To you? or you? or you?" He continued speaking till he reached the middle of the street; there he took his stand, and addressed them as his "neighbours and countrymen." He had his usual success. Several of the crowd cried out: "He shall speak. Yes yes!" Others swore that no man should touch him. He was conducted in safety to a house, and soon after left the town in a boat.

Passing along from town to town, he describes the societies as

* Journal, anno 1745.

in "great consternation." All kinds of reports and alarms were spread. The news of former mobs created general apprehensions of continual riots; but the courageous perseverance and patient endurance with which they had been met were fast subduing them. St. Ives was now "the most still and honourable post," so greatly had the times changed. At Trewint he heard that Francis Walker had been driven thence, but had since been an instrument of great good wherever he had gone. "Indeed," he adds, "I never remember so great an awakening in Cornwall wrought in so short a time, among young and old, rich and poor, from Trewint quite to the seaside." He passed into Wales. The truth hath spread with mighty effect through most of the Principality. "We are here," he wrote, "in a new world, as it were, in peace, and honour, and abundance; how soon should I melt away in this sunshine; but the goodness of God suffers it not."

While the Wesleys were thus traversing the country, preaching the word through evil report and good report, their lay coadjutors were stimulated by their example to scarcely less indefatigable labours. Several of them, as we have seen, were mobbed, impressed, or imprisoned; but their numbers continually multiplied, and their itinerant preaching began to awaken the whole country with interest for or against the Methodistic movement.

John Nelson had been released from his impressment about the middle of the preceding year. He forthwith resumed his evangelical travels, preaching with great power, mastering extraordinary rencounters, sometimes with rustic polemics, sometimes with the mob; and almost always subduing his opponents by his robust sense, his calm, pious courage, and a natural adroitness, which seldom failed to excite the admiration of the rabble, and convert them into clamorous friends. The very day of his release from his regiment, he preached, as we have seen, at Newcastle. He returned thence to his home at Birstal, where he found that his former converts had been seriously perverted by Antinomian teachers during his absence. He went out, and mounting a table in the midst of a great assembly, recalled them to their former faith. He was esteemed as an apostle by the simple multitude, and an extraordinary effect was produced by his exhortation. "A trembling," he says, "spread among them; many fell to the ground, and cried out, 'Lord, save, or I perish.'"* Many came to him with tears, acknowledging that they had been deluded in his absence, and begging him to pray for them. Nelson was a thorough student of the Bible, and, in the best sense, a good

* Nelson's Journal.

theologian, though not much of a polemic. His sound judgment and wholesome sentiments soon prevailed, and restored the society at Birstal. Having achieved this salutary work, he went to York, in the streets of which he had been hooted, while led to prison by soldiers, six months before. He had spoken some words of exhortation, and scattered some small books there at that time, and now he was welcomed by almost a score of persons, who had found peace with God, and thrice as many who were seeking it, the result of those casual efforts, for no one had been there to instruct them since. He received a letter from Sunderland, inviting him thither. Two men had conversed with him as his regiment passed through that town; his exhortations had taken effect upon their hearts also, and they now opened the way for Methodism among their neighbours. On his return from Sunderland, he preached at Nottingham Cross. His eloquence subdued the crowd, but a few individuals attempted to burn his face with squibs. They failed, however, and burning themselves, left him to finish his discourse in quiet. When he had concluded, a military man came to him, and, kneeling on the earth, besought him with tears to pray that God would have mercy upon his soul, for he had come there to pull him down; "but your words," he continued, "have come as a sword to my heart, and I am convinced you are God's servant. I hope I shall begin to lead a new life from this hour." Nelson's peculiar power was continually producing such effects, and none seemed to feel it more readily than soldiers and rude, hard-hearted men. At another visit to Nottingham about this time, a mob rushed into the house where he was preaching, and drowned his voice with outcries. He endeavoured to speak on, but one of the rioters came behind him, and filled his mouth with dirt. "I think," he says, "I never felt myself so near being choked in my life; but when I had got the dirt out, I spoke on." He had not proceeded long before the ringleader turned about, and said: "Let him alone, for he is right, and we are wrong; and if any of you touch him, I will knock you down." He guarded Nelson to his lodgings, and bore many blows for him, and desired the faithful preacher to pray for him, that he might not rest till he had found peace with God, for he was sure he had fought against the truth, but would do so no more.

Nelson returned again to Sunderland, and, standing in deep snow, preached to the greater part of the town, who remained patiently in the cold to hear him. At Wednesbury he found that several of the fiercest persecutors were now content to bear themselves the reproach of the Gospel. In Birstal, in Somersetshire

and Wiltshire, and in many other places, did this good and courageous man thus pursue his incessant labours, subduing the rudest minds by his homely sense and natural eloquence.

Meanwhile Wesley was surprised by extraordinary news from the Continent. Methodism had broken out in the British army in Flanders, and was achieving in camps and on battle-fields the moral miracles which it had effected among the miners of Cornwall, Kingswood, and Newcastle.* Some six or seven soldiers had begun to preach, places of worship had been established in different camps, and congregations of a thousand hearers at a time gathered in them; several hundreds of converts had been formed into societies, and many of them died triumphing in the faith amid the carnage of battle.

John Evans had heard Wesley on Kennington Common. His religious convictions, which had been strong from his childhood, could not be dissipated in the camp. At the battle of Dettingen the balls flew thick about him; his comrades fell on either hand; but he was spared, and felt that his remaining life must be consecrated to God. He found an old Bible in one of the baggage-waggons, and began to study it; the pains of hell, he wrote Wesley, got hold upon him, and he dared no longer commit any outward sin. He met John Haime, a Methodist soldier, who instructed him, and led him into the path of life. He and his religious comrades opened two places of worship in Ghent, and services were held by them there every day. "He continued," says Wesley, "to preach and live the Gospel till the battle of Fontenoy." He fought bravely on that field, and died there, as we shall presently see, a death full of religious heroism.

John Haime, the chief, if not the first agent in these extraordinary scenes, was afterwards noted among Wesley's lay preachers. He was one of those remarkable men who, like Nelson, Bradburn, and Bramwell, were raised up by Methodism from humble life to eminent usefulness, and who characterized its early lay ministry by their own strongly-marked traits.

He had not Nelson's robust healthfulness of mind; his moral sensibilities were often rendered morbid by constitutional nervous disease, and unquestionably took at times the aspect of partial insanity; but this fact only renders more admirable the religious

* Letters from John Evans and John Haime, in Wesley's Journal, 1744—1745. Haime's four letters are given with only his initials, as he was living when Wesley published them; but their contents, compared with his autobiography (Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, vol. i.) prove beyond doubt that they were his.

courage with which he combated his own infirmities, and persevered through a long and afflicted life, with fidelity to his conscience and his duty. In his childhood he was inclined to religious meditation, and, like Nelson, "wandered about on the riversides, and through woods and solitary places, looking up to heaven many times with a heart ready to break."* The morbid tendency of his mind led him to despondence, which he at last endeavoured to dissipate by plunging into gross immoralities. Suicide itself was an alternative of which he often thought in these accesses of diseased feeling. He believed that he had passed beyond the reach of the Divine compassion, and represents himself as tempted to blaspheme God and die. At one time, having a stick in his hand, "I threw it," he says, "towards heaven against God with the utmost enmity." He sought relief to his troubled spirit in the army, and enlisted as a dragoon; but serious thoughts and gross excesses alternated in his life from day to day. Bunyan's "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners" fell into his hands. The Bedford pilgrim had passed through similar morbid trials, and his book was prized by the perplexed and desponding soldier as "the best he had ever seen," for it comforted him "with some hopes of mercy." But his despondence was not past; his feelings took the intensity of terror; the "hand of the Lord," he says, "came upon me with such weight as made me roar for very anguish of spirit." He now read and fasted, and went to church, and prayed seven times daily. One day, as he walked by the Tweed-side, he cried aloud, "being all athirst for God, 'Oh that thou wouldst hear my prayer, and let my cry come up before thee!'" "The Lord," he writes, "heard; he sent a gracious answer; he lifted me up out of the dungeon. He took away my sorrow and fear, and filled my soul with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. The stream glided sweetly along, and all nature seemed to rejoice with me. I was truly free; and had I had any one to guide me, I need never more have come into bondage."

Such a guide he needed above all things; an intelligent, devoted, healthful mind, sympathizing with and counselling his broken and lacerated spirit, would have saved him from years of anguish; but the only religious comrade he found in his barrack met his grateful acknowledgments of the grace of God, with the admonitory lesson, "Take care, for Satan can transform himself

* Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, written by themselves, vol. i. p. 150. London, 1837. These autobiographical sketches were first published by Wesley in his Arminian Magazine. Many of them possess extraordinary interest, both as illustrations of character and of early Methodism.

into an angel of light;" and his sensitive mind, always prompt with self-suspicions, sank again into darkness. He met in the street at Deptford John Cennick, who as we have seen had left Wesley to join Whitefield in the Calvinistic controversy. Haime told him the distress of his soul. "The work of the devil is upon you," said Cennick, and rode away. "It was," writes the heart-broken soldier, "it was of the tender mercies of God that I did not put an end to my life. I cried, 'O Lord, my punishment is greater than I can bear.'" Before many days, however, he was again comforted with peace in believing. He passed over to the Continent with his regiment. Alternating between despondence and joy, he was, meanwhile, strict in his religious habits; he reproved vice among his fellow-soldiers, and became practically an evangelist in the camp. He went into the battle of Dettingen exclaiming, "In Thee have I trusted; let me never be confounded." "My heart," he adds, "was filled with love, peace, and joy more than tongue can express. I was in a new world. I could truly say, 'Unto you who believe He is precious.'" Seven hours he stood amid the perils of the field, while his comrades fell around him; the one at his left hand was struck dead, but Haime came out of the battle safe, and triumphant in his faith.

Soon after this combat Sampson Staniforth, another memorable name in the catalogue of Wesley's lay preachers, arrived with his regiment in the camp. Unlike Haime, his youth had been spent with scarcely a religious impression. He had heard the Bible read in the family of his employer, but says that he knew not what it meant, nor why it was called the Word of God, nor why people went to church. He records that, during his early life, he never once thought, What was I born into the world for? What is my business in it? Or where shall I go when I leave it? He plunged into the worst excesses, and felt not the least remorse for any of his sins, "being as perfectly without God in the world as the beasts that perish." * He enlisted as a soldier, and in one of his marches heard Whitefield preach, but with little effect upon his conscience; down, indeed, to his arrival in the camp in Flanders, when he was twenty-five years old, he had never uttered a prayer. His vices in the camp were excessive, and several times periled his life. He was the last man in the army whom his Methodist comrades could have hoped to reclaim, much less to send back into England as a worthy and heroic recruit for the host of lay evangelists which was then gathering around the founders of Methodism.

* Lives of Early Methodist Preachers.

In camps, however, are found those contrasts of character which we detect in all disguises, and in all scenes of this our inexplicable life; and while many men plunge into the excitements of a military career, like Staniforth, from sheer recklessness, others, like Haime, seek in them relief from the restlessness of their moral sensibilities. Methodism has never made better converts than among soldiers. In the regiment of Staniforth was Mark Bond, his contrast in all respects. Bond had feared God from his third year; in his seventh year he thought he was tempted to curse Him, and went under a hedge and uttered the supposed blasphemy. From that time till he met the Methodists in the army he lived in daily despair of the Divine mercy. Afraid to commit suicide, he enlisted, with the hope of being killed in battle. "His ways," says Staniforth, "were not like those of other men;" he would not take drams; he was always sorrowful; he read much, prayed often in private, and sent his money home to his friends. This afflicted man, bound down so many years under a terrible delusion, was to reclaim the reprobate Staniforth. Bond went to hear Haime, Evans, Clement, and other Methodists of the camp. "With them he found," writes Staniforth, "what he wanted. God soon spoke peace to his soul, and he rejoiced with joy unspeakable." By some mysterious sympathy he could not keep away from Staniforth, but followed him continually with exhortations and warnings, till he brought him to the meetings of the Methodist soldiers.

There Staniforth was surprised, the first time in his life, with religious thoughts; the tears flowed down his cheeks, the rock was rent. "I was knocked down," he says, "like an ox. I had nothing to plead, having never had either the power or the form of godliness. No works, no righteousness was mine. I could only say, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!'" He immediately broke away from all his vices. His "dear companion," as he now always called Bond, asked him if he had a Bible, or any good book. He replied that he had none, and had never read any in his life. Bond had but a piece of an old Bible, and gave it to him; it was doubtless the dearest gift he could make, short of his own life, but "I can do better without it than you," was his just remark. Bond took him as his comrade, put his own pay with his, to help him out of debt, and treated him with the tenderness and care of a parent towards a child. Staniforth, however, saw the enormous vices of his life in such a light as appalled him; he thought he must have committed the unpardonable sin; but Bond was prepared for him on that point, having vanquished the same

delusion after years of despair. At last, in secret prayer, he was enabled to believe his sins forgiven. His intense thoughts portrayed Christ on the cross, amid the opening clouds, as in a vision. "All guilt," he says, "was gone, and my soul was filled with unutterable peace."

The change in Staniforth's life wrought "quite an alarm" throughout his regiment; he had been their leader in vice, and no one could gainsay his conversion; at least ten of his immediate comrades were converted through his example, and "the flame spread through all the camp, so that we had," he writes, "many hearers, and more and more were continually added to the society." The army was divided, but the new military evangelists were also providentially distributed; Haime and Evans went to Bruges, and Clements and others to Ghent. The number of converts increased daily; there were some in almost every regiment. At least three hundred were united in societies, and seven preachers were almost daily proclaiming the Word among them. Haime preached usually five times a day at different places, walking frequently between twenty and thirty miles. He hired others to do his camp duties, that he might have more time for these religious services. Tabernacles containing several rooms, for various meetings, were erected in the camps. "I had now," he says, "three armies against me: the French army, the wicked English army, and an army of devils." The latter beset him yet with religious perplexity and dejection, but could not subdue him.

At Bruges the English general gave him permission to preach every day in the English church; the Methodist soldiers marched on Sundays in procession to the service, and their good singing charmed thither the officers and their families.

A severe test awaited these devoted men, but they met it as became "good soldiers of the Lord Jesus." They had become marked men throughout the army, by their abstinence from the immoralities of the camp, and their earnest recommendation of religion as a fitness for life and a preparation for death. On the 1st of May, 1745, the battle of Fontenoy required them to face death in the ranks with their forty-six thousand comrades, and there was no little interest felt among officers and men to see how their religion would bear the trial. The day before, Staniforth, who was now firm in his faith, was in the ranks, ready to be led on. "I stepped out of the line," he says, "and threw myself on the ground, and prayed that God would deliver me from all fear, and enable me to behave as a Christian and good soldier. Glory be to God, he heard my cry, and took away all my fear. I came

into the ranks again, and had both peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." They lay on their arms all night. Bond, his "dear companion," was by his side, for their friendship had become like that of Jonathan and David. "We had," says Staniforth, "sweet communion together, having constant and strong confidence in God." At dawn they were advancing towards Fontenoy, and already the terrors of battle confronted them; the dead were strewn along their march; they charged the trenches of the French and many of the Methodists fell; but the two friends survived the day, though Bond received two musket-balls, one striking him on the right thigh, and hitting two pieces of coin which were in his pocket, the other striking a clasp knife, and bending the blade, but doing no other harm. "I neither desired life nor death," says Staniforth, "but was entirely happy in God."

Meanwhile Haime and his companions were in similar perils on other parts of the field. One of his brethren, believing his death at hand, went into battle, exclaiming, "I am going to rest in the bosom of Jesus!" and was in heaven before night. "Indeed," writes Haime, "this day God was pleased to prove our little flock, and to show them His mighty power. They showed such courage and boldness in the fight as made the officers, as well as soldiers, amazed. When wounded, some cried out: I am going to my Beloved! Others, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! And many that were not wounded earnestly desired to be dissolved and to be with Christ." When Clements, one of the preachers, had his arm broken by a musket-ball, they would have carried him out of the battle, but he said, "No; I have an arm left to hold my sword; I will not go yet." When a second shot broke his other arm, he said, "I am as happy as I can be out of paradise." John Evans, now a preacher also, having both his legs taken off by a chain-shot, was laid across a cannon to die; where, as long as he could speak, he was praising God, and exhorting all around him. Haime stood the hottest fire of the enemy for several hours. He believed he should not die that day. After about seven hours a cannon-ball killed his horse under him. An officer cried out, "Haime, where is your God now?" He answered, "Sir, He is here with me, and He will bring me out of this battle;" presently a cannon-ball took off the officer's head. Haime's horse fell upon him, and one cried out, "Haime is gone!" But he replied, "He is not gone yet." He soon disengaged himself, and walked on, praising God. "I was exposed," he says, "both to the enemy and to our own horse; but that did not discourage me at all, for I knew the God of Jacob was with

me. I had a long way to go, through all our horse, the balls flying on every side; and all the way lay multitudes bleeding, groaning, or just dead. Surely I was as in the fiery furnace, but it did not singe a hair of my head. The hotter the battle grew, the more strength was given me; I was as full of joy as I could contain." As he was quitting the field he met one of his brethren, seeking water, and covered with blood, so that he could not at first recognize him. The wounded Methodist smiled, and said: "Brother Haime, I have got a sore wound." "Have you got Christ in your heart?" asked Haime. "I have," was the reply; "and I have had Him all this day. I have seen many good and glorious days, with much of God; but I never saw more of it than this day. Glory be to God for all His mercies!"

Four preachers, and many members of the Societies fell on the field. In a later battle, nearer Maestricht, Staniforth lost Bond, his companion and guide. He was shot through the leg by a musket-ball. As his friend carried him away, the dying man exhorted "him to stand fast in the Lord." Staniforth had to leave him and resume his place in the ranks, but on a retreat found him where he had laid him. By this time he had received another ball through his thigh. They were obliged to part, for the enemy was pressing on; but, writes Staniforth, "his heart was full of love, and his eyes full of heaven." "There fell," he adds, "a great Christian, a good soldier, and a faithful friend."

Staniforth returned to England, and became a devoted Methodist preacher.

Haime continued his labours in the army for some time; but having gone to Antwerp for forage, he made some small purchases there for his comrades on Sunday, a custom almost universal among both Papists and Protestants on the Continent. He was suddenly seized with the thought that he had apostatized by this act. His morbid sensibilities were so affected by the impression, that for twenty years he suffered despair itself, not daring even to pray much of that time. He maintained, however, the strictness of his external life, and he ceased not to preach, though bending under despondency. "Frequently," he says, "as I was going to preach, the devil has set upon me as a lion, telling me he would have me just then, so that it has thrown me into a cold sweat. In this agony I have caught hold of the Bible, and read, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous!' I have said to the enemy, 'This is the Word of God, and thou canst not deny it!' Thereat he would be like a man that shrunk back from the thrust of a sword. But he would be

at me again. I again met him in the same way; till at last, blessed be God, he fled from me. And even in the midst of his sharpest assaults God gave me just strength enough to bear them. When he has strongly suggested, just as I was going to preach, 'I will have thee at last!' I have answered (sometimes with too much anger), 'I will have another out of thy hand first!' And many, while I was myself in the deep, were truly convinced and converted to God." On returning to England he entered the Methodist ministry; Wesley endeavoured to meet the peculiar necessities of his case; and, in advanced age, the suffering soldier, who had shown his good courage on the field and in the itinerant ministry, conquered his constitutional dejection, the terrible foe before which his brave spirit had so often recoiled, but never succumbed. During nearly twenty years more of life he presented an example of Christian enjoyment which should be an encouraging lesson to all similar sufferers. The comfort which Methodism brought to Bond and Haime, it has afforded to thousands of such despondent minds; its generous theology disowns the delusion which depressed them; and its vivid spirit, inspiring the heart with confidence in the Divine love, and exalting the sensibilities with devotional and joyful emotion, affords the best moral support against the influence of mental disease.

Many of these Methodist soldiers, awaiting the morning of the resurrection, sleep in Christ on the battle-fields of the Continent; many returned home when the war ended, some to strengthen the growing Methodist societies, some the itinerant ministry. Six months after the battle of Fontenoy, Charles Wesley, then in London, wrote in his journal: "We had twenty of our brethren from Flanders to dine with us at the Foundry."* Still later he met a number of them at the camp at Deptford, on their way to suppress the Northern Rebellion. They assembled in the society there. "We solemnly commended them," he says, "to the grace of God before they set out to meet the rebels. They were without fear or disturbance, knowing the hairs of their head are all numbered." Several others, on arriving in London, were presented by Colonel Gumley (one of Whitefield's converts) to Lady Huntingdon. "I was truly amazed," says the Countess, "with the devotional spirit of these poor men, many of whom are rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom."† Whitefield met some of them in Edinburgh more than three years after the battle of Fontenoy,

* Journal of Rev. Charles Wesley, vol. i., page 407. London, 1849.

† Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, chap. vii.

and formed them into a society. On leaving that city he addressed them an affectionate pastoral letter.

Thomas Rankin, one of Wesley's earliest missionaries to America, formed in his youth a society of them at Dunbar, his native town in Scotland. They had hired a room and met for worship every morning and evening. A great religious interest extended through the town from these meetings, and many of the inhabitants were converted and gathered into their little company.* They were dragoons of John Haime's regiment. At Musselborough also they had formed a society, and were instrumental in the spread of vital religion among the townsmen. Wesley's preachers visited them and formed them into regular "appointments." The first Methodist Societies of Scotland were the two at Dunbar and Musselborough.† Wesley found them prospering twelve years later, and the invitation which led to his first visit to that country came from a military officer who was in quarters at Musselborough. Some who were in the same regiment with Haime, but resisted if they did not resent his exhortations, joined the Methodists after they returned to England. Eight years later Wesley found seventeen of Haime's fellow-dragoons in the society at Manchester, where they were "patterns of seriousness, zeal, and all holy conversation."‡ Nearly ten years later he met at Trowbridge one who found peace with God while a soldier in Flanders, and having been much prospered in business since his discharge, had built a preaching house at his own expense. He was ambitious that Wesley should preach the first sermon in it, but it was so excessively crowded before the introductory hymn was finished, that he had to disappoint the generous soldier, by going out and preaching at the door to a "multitude of hearers, rich and poor."

A quarter of a century after the battle of Fontenoy, an aged preacher wrote to John Wesley that "all the promises of Scripture were full of comfort to him, "*particularly this: 'I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction;'*" that "the Scriptures were all precious to his soul as the rain to the thirsty land;" that he "could now truly say, '*The Lord is my shepherd, therefore shall I lack nothing; he maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters; he restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*'" It was the

* Life of Thomas Rankin, in Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, written by themselves.

† Coke and Moore's Life of Wesley, chap. ii. sec. 2.

‡ Wesley's Journal, anno 1753.

despondent but brave John Haime who thus wrote. By the grace of God he had conquered both himself and the devil, and was now ready to conquer "the last enemy."

In the Arminian Magazine for 1784 we read: "On the 18th of August, 1784, died, at Whitechurch, in Hampshire, that faithful soldier of Christ, John Haime, in the seventy-eighth year of his age. He preached as long as he was able to speak, and longer than he could stand without support." When his sight and speech had nearly failed, he exclaimed, "When my soul departs from this body, a convoy of angels will conduct me to the paradise of God."

More than forty years after the battle of Fontenoy, another veteran preacher wrote to Wesley: "I am now in the sixty-third year of my age, and, glory be to God, I am not weary of well-doing! I find my desires after God stronger than ever, my understanding is more clear in the things of God, and my heart is united more than ever both to Him and His people. I know their religion and mine is the gift of God, through Christ, and the work of God by his Spirit." It was Sampson Staniforth; and in the Arminian Magazine for 1799 we read: "Thus died Sampson Staniforth, who had steadily walked with God for nearly sixty years. He preached the Gospel for almost fifty years, and finished his course in the seventy-ninth year of his age. He possessed his soul in patience, and looked to the hour of his dissolution with joyful expectation of being for ever with the Lord. He was neither molested with gloomy doubts nor painful fears, nor was the enemy of souls permitted to distress him; but as his heart stood fast, believing in the Lord, so his evidence for heaven continued unclouded to the last moment of life."

Such is one of the most extraordinary passages in the history of not only Methodism, but of Christianity in any age; one of the most striking proofs of the inherent and inextinguishable power of the religious instinct in the most degraded natures and in the most adverse circumstances; one of those demonstrations of it which confirm the hope of good men who labour for the final and universal triumph of Christianity. It seemed indeed a part of the providential design of Methodism that it should multiply these demonstrations, as preparatory for that deepened faith, and those great enterprises of Christian propagandism which have arisen from the impulse that it gave to British and American Protestantism. It had wrought out such demonstrations among the colliers of Kingswood and Newcastle, the miners of Cornwall, the peasants of Yorkshire, and the drunken multitudes of Moorfields

and Kennington Common; it now presented another amid the vices of the camp and the carnage of battle, rescuing scores and hundreds of ignorant and corrupt men, whom it was to record as triumphing in death amid the horrors of war, or as life-long examples of Christian purity and usefulness. If its history teaches any one lesson as paramount to all its other suggestions, it is that good men, labouring and suffering for the salvation of their race, should "have faith in God" by having it in humanity.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE CONFERENCE OF 1745 TO THE CONFERENCE OF 1750.

The Rebellion under Charles Stuart—Wesley abroad amid the Public Alarm—His Preaching at Newcastle—He publishes the concluding part of his Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion—Extensive Results of Methodism—Its Exemption from Heresy—Its Doctrinal Liberality—Charles Wesley—John Wesley in Cornwall—In the North—John Nelson—He encounters terrible Mobs—Wesley itinerating—Mobs subdued—Success of Methodism—Vincent Perronet—William Grimshaw—His Eccentricities—His extraordinary Labours—He is Mobbed with Wesley at Roughlee—Charles Wesley itinerating—Extraordinary Riot at Devizes—The Wesleys in Middle Life—Marriage of Charles Wesley—John Wesley and Grace Murray.

THE second Conference met in Bristol on the first day of August, 1745. Methodism advanced rapidly during the ensuing ecclesiastical year, notwithstanding the general agitation of the public mind, occasioned by the attempt of Charles Stuart to regain for his family the British throne. He had taken Edinburgh, and threatened England with invasion. The plans of Cope, commander of the Government troops, were feebly conceived, and as feebly executed. The possession of Edinburgh and the victory of Preston Pans inspired the rebels with confidence, and spread alarm through the whole country. As the Pretender was a Papist, and a pensioner of France, the liberties of England and her Protestant faith would be endangered by his success, notwithstanding his specious promises. Christian Englishmen could not, therefore, but consider his movements as imminently perilous to the country, and an alarming retribution from God for its sins. The Wesleys went through the land distributing admonitory tracts and hymns, and calling the people to repentance in daily sermons. Newcastle, situated far in the north, was especially

exposed to the enemy, and was in great commotion. John Wesley went thither immediately after the Conference, that he might be with its Methodist society amid the agitation.* When he arrived he found that all householders were summoned to meet the mayor to devise means of protection. As he was not a townsman he did not go, but sent a loyal letter. The people were placed under arms; the walls were fortified, and the gates filled up. "Many," he says, "began to be much concerned for us because our society house was without the walls. But the Lord is a wall of fire to all that trust in Him."

Day by day the news from the north became more alarming. Citizens who had the necessary means, and especially the gentry, were constantly removing their goods and hastening to the south. Wesley meanwhile preached day and night in the streets and in neighbouring villages, encouraging the loyalty of the people, and calling upon them to repent of their sins, and put their trust in God. News came that the enemy was in full march, and would reach the city the next day. Instead of fleeing away for safety with the many who were leaving, Wesley stayed in the city. "At eight o'clock," he says, "I called on a multitude of sinners in Gateshead to seek the Lord while He might be found. Mr. Ellison preached another earnest sermon, and all the people seemed to bend before the Lord. In the afternoon I expounded part of the lesson for the day—Jacob wrestling with the angel. The congregation was so moved that I began again and again, and knew not how to conclude. And we cried mightily to God to send his majesty King George help from His holy place, and to spare a sinful land yet a little longer, if haply they might know the day of their visitation." A person from the north was apprehended and put in prison; he attempted to cut his throat, but was saved from death by the physicians, and disclosed plans of the rebels which, if successful, must have been fatal to the city. To their detection Wesley ascribes its escape. Believing the danger over for the present, he directed his course elsewhere.

Until the next Conference his time was spent in unremitted travels and preaching. He prepared, also, during this interval the concluding part of his "Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion." It is eloquent in its earnestness. After describing the extreme demoralization which had prevailed through the nation, he writes: "The grace of God which bringeth salvation, present salvation, from inward and outward sin, hath abounded of late years in such a degree as neither we nor our fathers had known.

* Journal, anno 1745.

How extensive is the change which has been wrought on the minds and lives of the people! Know ye not that the sound is gone forth into all the land; that there is scarce a city or considerable town to be found where some have not been roused out of the sleep of death, and constrained to cry out in the bitterness of their soul, 'What must I do to be saved?' that this religious concern has spread to every age and sex; to most orders and degrees of men; to abundance of those in particular who in time past were accounted monsters of wickedness, drinking in iniquity like water, and committing all uncleanliness with greediness."*

He contends that this remarkable reformation was attended by no important outbreaks of heretical opinions or popular superstition. "In former times," he remarks, "wherever an unusual concern for the things of God hath appeared, on the one hand strange and erroneous opinions continually sprung up with it; on the other, a zeal for things which were no part of religion, as though they had been essential branches of it. But it has not been so in the present. No stress has been laid on anything, as though it were necessary to salvation, but what is undeniably contained in the Word of God. And of the things contained therein, the stress laid on each has been in proportion to the nearness of its relation to what is there laid down as the sum of all—the love of God and our neighbour. So free from superstition, so thoroughly Scriptural, is that religion which has lately spread in this nation." He further asserts that the new movement was singularly exempt from bigotry. "The Methodists are in nowise bigoted to opinions. They do indeed hold rigid opinions, but they are peculiarly cautious not to rest the weight of Christianity there. They have no such overgrown fondness for any opinions as to think those alone will make them Christians, or to confine their affection or esteem to those who agree with them therein. There is nothing they are more fearful of than this, lest it should steal upon them unawares. They contend for nothing trifling, as if it were important; for nothing indifferent, as if it were necessary; but for everything in its own order."

Such was the very genius of Methodism. In an eloquent concluding passage, Wesley asserts its liberality with still greater emphasis. He asks his opponents why they will persist in opposing a work of God like this? "If you say, 'Because you hold opinions which I cannot believe are true,' I answer, Believe them true or false, I will not quarrel with you about any opinion. Only see that your heart be right towards God, that you know

* Wesley's Works.

and love the Lord Jesus Christ; that you love your neighbour, and walk as your Master walked, and I desire no more. I am sick of opinions, I am weary to hear them. My soul loathes this frothy food. Give me solid and substantial religion; give me an humble, gentle lover of God and man, a man full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy; a man laying himself out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love. Let my soul be with these Christians, wheresoever they are, and whatsoever opinion they are of. 'Whosoever' thus 'doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.' Inexcusably infatuated must you be, if you can ever doubt whether the propagation of this religion be of God. Only more inexcusable are those unhappy men who oppose, contradict, and blaspheme it."

Casting forth this noble appeal before the nation, he went forward prosecuting his evangelical labours among the common people in almost every city, town, and village on his course, from the Tweed to Land's End. Charles Wesley spent the year in equal labours. A great religious interest prevailed at Shepton-Mallet; he hastened from the Conference at Bristol to promote it; but in going to the place of preaching he slipped, and injured one of his legs so severely, that he was unable to walk for some time. He was carried about, however, from place to place, preaching daily on his knees. At Cardiff, a man who had been the most violent persecutor of the Methodists of that town, sent his Bath-chair to bear the disabled evangelist to his next appointment. "Indeed," he writes, "the whole place seems at present turned toward us."* During several weeks he could walk only by the aid of crutches, but preached twice a-day with great effect. "The word of God," he wrote, "is not bound if I am, but runs very swiftly. I have been *carried* to preach morning and evening." In Wales and Cornwall, in London, Bristol, Kingswood, and many other places, did he pursue his labours with continually increasing success, till the session of the next Conference.

The third Conference was held on the 12th of May,† 1746. It detained the itinerant labourers but two days from their fields. Wesley did not allude to it in his Journal, but hastened forth on his ministerial routes, which now extended over the whole of England and Wales. In August he traversed a large part of the Principality, preaching in churches, on tombstones, and on the

* Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley, chap. 12.

† Not the thirteenth, as the bound Minutes state. See Smith's History, book ii., chap. 3.

highways, to greater congregations than he had ever addressed in that part of the kingdom. He was mobbed but once during this excursion. In September he was again itinerating in Cornwall, where the miners still crowded to hear him. The amphitheatre at Gwennap presented greater hosts than ever, and peace prevailed everywhere. He was not disturbed in a single instance during this visit, and the worst persecutors had now become the most devoted converts. The societies were not only enjoying rest from their late terrible trials, but were gathering strength daily, and extending to all the towns and villages. Methodism was, in fine, taking universal and ineradicable root among the Cornish population. The clergy, however, very generally stood aloof. There was one notable exception. Thompson, the tolerant and zealous rector of St. Gennis, was known as thoroughly Methodistic, and as the friend of Wesley, Whitefield, and Lady Huntingdon. He was a man of genius, and had been a favourite among the gentry and clergy, though debauched in morals while in the ministry. A terrible dream, twice repeated, led him to reflection. He reformed his life, and began to preach in earnest, and his parishioners were generally awakened and reformed. He befriended Wesley amid the Cornish persecutions, and was soon himself honoured as a "Methodist." All the neighbouring clergy closed their pulpits against him, and he was cited at last before Lavington, his diocesan, the noted opponent of Methodism, to give an account of his conduct. Lavington threatened to "strip the gown from him" for his Methodistic practices. Thompson stripped it off himself, and casting it at the prelate's feet, said, "I can preach the Gospel without a gown," and left him astonished at his independence. On recovering from his amazement, Lavington recalled him, and soothed him with explanatory remarks. The zealous rector remained faithful to his Methodist friends till death, and did much for the moral improvement of Cornwall.*

During the winter Wesley directed his course towards the north, through severe storms. He instituted a thorough pastoral examination of the societies on his route; a small one at Tetney

* He died in 1782. Wesley says (Journal, 1782), "I preached in the street at Camelford. Being informed here that my old friend Mr. Thompson, rector of St. Gennis, was near death, and had expressed a particular desire to see me, I judged no time was to be lost; so, borrowing the best horse I could find, I set out, and rode as fast as I could." He found the rector just alive, and troubled, like Bunyan's pilgrim, with inward conflicts. Wesley proved a comforter to him; they took the Lord's Supper together for the last time; "and I left him," writes he, "much happier than I found him, calmly waiting till his change should come."

he pronounced the best in the country. Its class-paper showed an extraordinary liberality for so poor a people. "Are you the richest society in England?" he inquired. "All of us," replied the class-leader, "who are single persons, have agreed together to give both ourselves and *all we have* to God; and we do it gladly, whereby we are able, from time to time, to entertain all the strangers that come to Tetney, who often have no food to eat, nor any friend to give them a lodging." At Osmotherly, a large congregation gathered around him, and "those," he wrote, "who had been the most bitter gainsayers seemed now to be melted into love." At Newcastle he was encouraged to find the society alive with zeal, and in perfect harmony. "They are," he writes, "of one heart and of one mind. I found all in the house of the same spirit, pouring out their souls to God many times in a day together, and breathing nothing but love and brotherly kindness." Many from the higher classes assembled at the society's place of worship. "Surely," he wrote, "God is working a new thing in the earth. Even to the rich is the Gospel preached; and there are, of these also, who have ears to ear, and hearts to receive the truth as it is in Jesus." At Blanchlan he preached in the churchyard to a great crowd, gathered from the lead-mines of all the neighbouring country as far as Allendale, six miles distant. They drank in his words as if athirst for the truth. At Sunderland, where John Nelson had founded Methodism, as we have seen, by a passing word of exhortation, while led through the place in his regiment, Wesley now preached in the streets to a multitude which reminded him of the living seas at Kennington Common. He sought out the neglected and degraded towns and hamlets, and penetrated especially into the mining villages. At Hexham, he says, "a multitude of people soon ran together, the greater part mad as colts untamed. Many had promised to do mighty things. But the bridle was in their teeth. I cried aloud: 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.' They felt the sharpness of the two-edged sword, and sank into seriousness on every side, insomuch that I heard not one unkind or uncivil word, till we left them standing and staring one at another." Happily he was now able, by means of the lay ministry, to send labourers into the fields wherever he thus broke up the fallow ground; men who had been plucked by Methodism from the midst of these same heathen crowds, and knew how to approach them.

John Nelson was unquestionably at the head of this growing corps of lay evangelists. Wesley unexpectedly met him about

this time at Osmotherly, whither the good stonemason had just escaped from perils such as he had never before encountered, and which could not have failed to crown him with the honours of martyrdom, had it not been for the Herculean vigour of his frame. Since we last parted from him, he had been pursuing his itinerant labours with unfaltering energy and success at Birstal, and in Somersetshire and Wiltshire. He spent four months in these localities, and gathered numerous converts into societies at Poulton, Coleford, Oakley, Shepton-Mallet, Rood, and Bearfield. "So God doth work," wrote the brave man, amid these successes—"so God doth work, and none can hinder, though the instruments be ever so weak; if He bids, a worm shall shake the earth."* In his own town of Birstal, contrary to the usual fate of prophets, he was held in high honour, and saw Methodism spread out on the right and left. No bishop of the realm could have wielded a stronger influence among his humble fellow-townsmen. He was called about this time to witness there an affecting instance of the power of religion. An "old gentleman" who had been among his opposers, and had aided in his impressment, was prostrated by mortal sickness, and now sent, with contrition, for his prayers and instructions. Nelson says, "he trembled and wept bitterly, and I found him under as great convictions as I ever saw a man." After his third visit, the aged sufferer was comforted with peace in believing, and for five weeks that he remained on earth he was not a day without some divine consolation, and continued to utter praises to God, and exhortations to his family and visitors till he expired. "He seemed," says Nelson, "to be sanctified body, soul, and spirit." He requested Nelson to preach over his corpse. The scene exhibited by the humble itinerant, as he stood at the grave of the old but reclaimed persecutor, must have been sublime. He had gathered many similar trophies from the ranks of his enemies while they were in the fulness of life and health, but here was one plucked from the very grasp of death. The discourse was attended with extraordinary effect. Many of his former enemies were smitten under it with remorse; and a "great awakening," he writes to Wesley, "followed throughout the town."†

In the former strongholds of the mob quiet now prevailed, for the itinerants had won the field. But Nelson was a pioneer,

* Nelson's Journal.

† This incident is not related in his Journal, but in a letter to Wesley, published by the latter in the first volume of the Arminian Magazine (1778), p. 259.

continually penetrating into new regions, and almost everywhere riotous outrages were enacted at his coming. No man, not even Wesley himself, had more success in mastering such hostilities; but sometimes they were uncontrollable, and his escape from death seemed miraculous. As he advanced about this time towards the course of Wesley, he was assailed at Harborough by almost the "whole town, men, women, and children." The young men and apprentices had previously combined with the determination to seize the first Methodist preacher who should come among them, and drag him, with a halter round his neck, to the river to drown him, thereby deterring any others, as they hoped, from troubling the town. A son of the parish clergyman was leader of the mob. A partially insane man had been appointed to put the halter on the preacher's neck, and now assailed Nelson with one in his hand. A butcher stood with a rope to aid in dragging him to the stream. But Nelson's power over his hearers was invincible; while his voice was heard, the leaders of the mob could do nothing. They procured six large hand-bells as the best means of breaking the spell of his eloquence. They succeeded in drowning his voice, when the madman rushed in and put the halter to his throat. Nelson pushed it back, and the maniac fell to the ground as if "knocked down by an axe." The butcher stood trembling with awe, and dared not touch him. A constable who was disposed to favour the rioters came, but on approaching the preacher "turned pale," took him by the hand, led him through the mob, and helping him to mount his horse, bade him "go on in the name of the Lord." "O my God!" exclaimed the delivered evangelist, "hitherto thou hast helped me!"

Nelson was to encounter, however, worse perils immediately after at Hepworth Moor. He was assailed there with a shower of stones, while preaching on a table in the open air. All who were around him fled, leaving him as a mark for the flying missiles, but none touched him. When he descended and was departing, he was struck on the back of his head with a brick, and fell bleeding to the earth. He was unable to rise for some time, but, being lifted up, staggered away, the blood running down his back, and filling his shoes, and the mob following him with shouts and menaces that they would kill him as soon as he passed the limits of the town. "Lord," cried the periled Methodist, as he tottered along, "Thou wast slain without the gate, and canst deliver me from the hands of these bloodthirsty men." An honest man opened his door and took him in; a surgeon dressed his wound, and the same day he was on his way to preach at Acomb.

There his trials were to culminate. A coach drove up, crowded within and without by young men, who sang bacchanalian songs, and threw rotten eggs at the women of the assembly. Two of the strongest of the rioters approached him, one of them swearing that he would kill him on the spot. Handing his coat and wig to his associate, he rushed at the preacher, crying, "If I do not kill him, I will be damned." Nelson stepped aside, and the assailant pitched on his head; on rising he repeated the attempt, and rent away Nelson's shirt-collar, but again fell. In a third assault, he prostrated the preacher, and leaping with his knees upon him, beat him until he was senseless, opening meanwhile the wound on his head, which bled freely. The ruffian supposed he was dead, and returned to his associates, seizing as he passed one of Nelson's friends, whom he threw against a wall with such violence as to break two of his ribs. The rest of the mob doubted whether Nelson had been completely despatched, and twenty of them approached him. They found him bleeding profusely, and lifted him up. The brother of the parish clergyman was among them, and denouncing him, said: "According to your preaching, you would prove our ministers to be blind guides and false prophets; but we will kill you as fast as you come." Another said: "If Wesley comes on Tuesday, he shall not live another day in this world." When they had got him into the street, they set up a huzza, and a person caught hold of his right hand, "and gave him a hasty pluck; at the same time, another struck him on the side of his head, and knocked him down. As he arose, they again prostrated him. No less than eight times did they fell him to the earth. His robust frame alone saved him from death. When he lay on the ground unable to rise again, they took him by the hair of his head, and dragged him upon the stones for nearly twenty yards, some kicking him, meanwhile, with merciless rage. Six of them stood upon him, to "tread the Holy Ghost out of him," as they said. "Then they let me alone a little while," he writes, "and said one to another, 'We cannot kill him.' One said, 'I have heard that a cat hath nine lives, but I think that he hath nine score.' Another said, 'If he has, he shall die this day.' A third said, 'Where is his horse? for he shall quit the town immediately.' And they said to me, 'Order your horse to be brought to you, for you shall go before we leave you.' I said, 'I will not, for you intend to kill me in private, that you may escape justice; but if you do murder me, it shall be in public; and it may be that the gallows will bring you to repentance, and your souls may be saved from the wrath to come." They attempted

then to drag him to a well, and thrust him into it; but a courageous woman, who was standing near it, defended him, knocking several of his persecutors down. These ruffians passed in the community for gentlemen, and while still harassing Nelson at the well, they were recognized by two ladies in a carriage from the city, whom they knew; they slunk away confounded, and their victim escaped.

Such was John Nelson's most perilous itinerant adventure. He certainly deserved for it the honours, though he escaped the fate of martyrdom. His powerful constitution rallied immediately from the effect of this terrible treatment, and the very next day the heroic man rode forty miles, and stood, with unbroken spirit, at evening, resting himself against a tombstone in Osmotherly churchyard, listening to Wesley as he proclaimed from it the word of life to the assembled population of the town. "I found," he writes, "his word to come with power to my soul, and was constrained to cry out, 'O Lord, I will praise Thee for Thy goodness to me, for Thou has been with me in all my trials; Thou hast brought me out of the jaws of death; and though Thou didst permit men to ride over my head, and laid affliction on my loins, yet Thou has brought me through fire and water into a wealthy place.'" He assures us that in all these perils his soul was kept in peace, so that he felt neither fear nor anger, and adds with grateful emphasis: "So far, Lord, I am Thy witness; for Thou dost give strength for our day according to Thy word, and grace to help in time of need. O my dear Redeemer, how shall I praise Thee as Thou oughtest to be praised? Oh let my life be a living sacrifice to Thee, for it is by Thee alone that I have escaped both temporal and eternal death." His meekness was equal to his courage, and both were surpassed only by his charity.

The good seed scattered by this noble evangelist amid the mobs of Yorkshire, sprang up, however, under the very storm, in rich harvests. His fiercest persecutors became often the most zealous Methodists; they were sometimes smitten by their consciences in the act of assailing or burlesquing him and his fellow-labourers. John Thorpe was a frequenter of an ale-house in Yorkshire, where such burlesques were the entertainment of a bacchanalian company. One after another mounted a table, and, with the Bible in hand, recited a text, and mimicked the itinerant preachers. Three had done so when Thorpe took his stand, declaring he would excel them all by an imitation of Whitefield. He opened the book by hazard for his text, and read Luke xiii. 3: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." The passage struck his conscience

like a bolt from heaven. He was terrified at his own guilt, but proceeded with his discourse to the astonishment of his drunken associates, who were spell-bound with awe, and dared not interrupt him. Some of his sentences, he says, made his own hair stand erect. "If ever I preached in my life," he added, "by the assistance of the Spirit of God, it was at that time." Finishing his discourse, he dismounted from the table, and returned home without another word to his companions; he forsook them for ever and immediately joined the Methodist Society. During two years he suffered under deep anguish, but at last found peace in believing, and became one of Wesley's preachers.*

Wesley and Nelson took counsel and comfort together at Osmotherly over their afflictions and successes, and separated immediately for other trials and triumphs. At Leeds, where Nelson had successfully established Methodism, Wesley found an extraordinary interest, and preached to an immense assembly, hundreds of whom went away unable to hear his voice. At Birstal, Nelson's home, the multitude was scarcely less numerous. At Keighley, where, during a previous visit, he had formed a society of ten members, he now met more than a hundred. At Manchester, where Nelson had preached the first Methodist lay sermon in 1743, he again met that noble lay labourer. Nelson had announced his coming through the city, and gathered a vast multitude to hear him. Wesley passed on to Plymouth, where he was again mobbed. A lieutenant, with drummers, and a retinue of soldiers and rabble, greeted him with huzzas. He rode into the midst of them and conquered, as usual. He took the lieutenant by the hand, and subdued him by a few gentle words. "Sir," exclaimed the soldier, "no man shall touch you; I will see you safe home. Stand off! Give back. I will knock the first man down that touches him!" and led him safely to his lodgings. "We then parted," says Wesley, "in much love." After the officer had left him he still kept his ground, and for half an hour addressed the astonished people, who, he says, "had forgotten their anger, and went away in high good humour." The next day he preached on the common to a "well-behaved and earnest congregation."

He went again into Cornwall. There the field had been severely contested, but, as we have seen, was won at last. At St. Ives, he says, "we walked to church without so much as one

* "He was successful wherever he went," says a writer in the Arminian Magazine. He afterward ministered to an Independent church, and died in 1776. A brother clergyman says: "He was a very holy man, much respected during his life, and made a glorious end."

huzza. How strangely has one year changed the scene in Cornwall! This is now a peaceable, nay, honourable station. They give us good words almost in every place. What have we done that the world should be so civil to us?" His favourite preaching place, the natural amphitheatre at Gwennap, was filled with an immense audience. At Bray, he says, "neither the house nor the yard could contain the congregation, and all were serious; the scoffers are vanished away; I scarce saw one in the county. I preached in the evening at Camborne to an equally serious congregation; I looked about for the champion who had so often sworn I should never more preach in that parish; but it seems he had given up the cause, saying, one may as well blow against the wind." There were eighteen exhorters in the county, some of whom had good talents, and did valuable service for the Societies. At a few new points he met with mobs, but they succumbed quickly before him. Returning to Bristol, he found the largest congregation he had ever seen there. "What," he writes, "has God wrought in this city! And yet, perhaps, the hundredth part of His work does not now appear." From Bristol he passed into Wales, and thence over to Ireland, where he spent more than a month.

During the remainder of our present period, down to the Conference of 1750, he travelled and preached with augmented activity. He made several visits to Ireland. In England and Wales he found Methodism everywhere advancing, and proving its evangelical power by its salutary results. At Coleford, he writes, "the colliers of this place were 'darkness,' indeed, but now they are light." At Wednesbury, formerly the scene of the worst riots, he preached to vast congregations, "every man, woman, and child," he says, "behaving in a manner becoming the Gospel." Even in London a favourable change appeared. St. Bartholomew's Church was again opened to him, and Bateman, the rector, had become known as a "Methodist." "How strangely is the scene changed!" he writes; "what laughter and tumult was there among the best of the parish when we preached in a London church ten years ago! And now all are calm and quietly attentive, from the least even to the greatest." The congregation in Moorfields, he adds the next day, was greatly enlarged, and their seriousness increased with their numbers, so "that it was comfortable even to see them." At his native town of Epworth, he was once more allowed to receive the Lord's Supper. He preached in the open air at the Cross, for the church could not contain the people, had it been open to him. Almost the whole town were present. "God has wrought," he says, "upon the

whole place. Sabbath-breaking and drunkenness are no more seen in these streets; cursing and swearing are rarely heard; wickedness hides its head already. Who knows but, by and by, God may utterly take it away?" At Grimsby, where the mob had repeatedly triumphed, his hearers crowded not only the large society-room, but adjacent apartments, the stairs, and the street, for "the fear of God had spread in an uncommon manner among this people also." At Newcastle, where he again spent considerable time, he found not only a great increase of members in the society, but also more spiritual life and zeal than he had ever witnessed there; and the same, he records, was true in all the neighbouring country societies. At Bolton tranquillity prevailed after a violent storm of several weeks, during which many were beaten and wounded, but none turned from their stedfastness. At Bristol the society had increased to more than seven hundred members. At Leeds and Birstal his congregations were so immense, that two-thirds of them could not hear his voice. "Who," he asks, "would have expected such an inconvenience as this, after we had been twelve years employed in the work. Surely none will now ascribe the number of the hearers to the novelty of field-preaching."

Wesley received important assistance during these times from Rev. Vincent Perronet, vicar of Shoreham, a man of saintly piety, who became his confidential counsellor, and gave two sons to the itinerant ministry. Perronet's house was often the resort of both the Wesleys for consultation. He adopted their strongest views of personal religion, and wrote several pamphlets in defence of Methodism. Wesley dedicated to him the "Plain Account of the People called Methodists." During a long life, this venerable man maintained unbroken friendship with the Methodist founders, and co-operated with them in their extraordinary plans of evangelization, though they were condemned by most of the regular clergy as dangerously eccentric, if not insanely fanatical. So important were his counsels in the early stages of Methodism, that Charles Wesley used to call him its Archbishop.*

A still more active coadjutor of the Wesleys among the regular clergy, at this time, was Rev. William Grimshaw, curate of Haworth, in Yorkshire. He had studied at Cambridge, and went from the university to his clerical duties corrupt in his morals and unsound in his opinions. Content with the perfunctory attendance on his parish duties, he considered himself a fair example of the clerical manners of the times; especially as it is

* Jackson's Centenary of Methodism, chap. 5.

said that he refrained, as much as possible, from gross swearing, unless "in suitable company," and when he got drunk, would take care to sleep it off before he went home.* In the twenty-sixth year of his age, he was arrested in this negligent and depraved course of life by powerful religious impressions. After ten years spent in orders, and a protracted period of mental anguish, which sometimes seemed to verge on insanity, he found consolation and purification in those vital doctrines which were distinctive of the theology of Methodism, though he had not yet heard a Methodist preacher, or read a Methodist publication. In 1742 he took charge of the curacy of Haworth, and three years afterwards gave in his adhesion to Wesley as one of his "Assistants."† He retained his parish at Haworth, but superintended two Methodist circuits which included it and extended over many towns in Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Cheshire. So thorough were his labours on these districts, that they usually bore the name of "Grimshaw's circuits," and the lay itinerants the title of "Grimshaw's preachers." He regulated the Classes, renewed the Tickets, conducted the Love-feasts, and did all the other duties of a Methodist preacher. He took part in the proceedings of Wesley's Conference once in three years when it was held at Leeds. When it sat in Bristol or London, his incessant itinerant preaching would not admit of his attendance.‡

He was an original character, but his eccentricities generally took a useful direction, and were combined with much humility, and with unusual charity. His Haworth parishioners are said to have been as ignorant and brutal as their country is wild and rugged, but he thoroughly reformed them. His congregations increased so much, that they could not get into the church, but crowded the doorways, windows, and adjacent fields. They often melted under his preaching, and many of his hearers fell to the earth as dead men. Four hamlets were comprised in his parish; besides his regular church services, he preached in these villages four times monthly, in order to reach the aged and infirm, and such as were not disposed to attend the regular service. Frequently he would preach before the doors of such as neglected the parish worship. "If you will not come to hear me at the church," he would say on these occasions, "you shall hear me at home; if you perish, you shall perish with the sound of the

* Grimshaw's Life, by Myles.

† Smith's History of Methodism, book ii., chap. 2.

‡ By Wesley's regulations, the Conference sessions were held for some years only at London, Bristol, and Leeds.

Gospel in your ears." He travelled over his two circuits every two weeks, often preaching thirty times a-week, and whenever he was at Haworth, he held a meeting in the parsonage at dawn or before it. If idlers loitered in the churchyard during worship, when the building was not crowded, he would go out while the congregation were singing, and compel them to go in. Sometimes he would escape from the church to the streets or alehouses, and hunting out the delinquents, would drive them before him to the service. He held a Sunday evening meeting expressly for such parishioners as excused themselves from the day worship on account of their poor clothes. He sometimes disguised himself, that he might go out among his parishioners and detect and reprove their vices. To a family who were noted for their supposed liberality to the poor, he went in the character of an aged beggar, and asked a night's lodging, but was turned away with harshness: he knew how to address them afterwards. He was devoted to Wesley's itinerants; his house was their home; he performed even menial services for them, and when the parsonage was crowded, as it often was by them and their religious followers, he would give up his bed and sleep in the barn. He cleaned their shoes; he opened his kitchen for their preaching; and as the rules of the Church would not allow them to be introduced into his pulpit, he built a chapel and preaching-house for them in his parish. When one of them had preached with great effect, he fell down at his feet, declaring that he was not worthy to stand in the presence of the unordained evangelist. Another he took in his arms with grateful admiration, exclaiming: "The Lord bless thee! this is worth a hundred of my sermons." He was almost recklessly liberal, denying himself of everything but the sheerest necessaries of life that he might aid the poor. It was his frequent boast, "If I should die to-day, I have not a penny to leave behind me." He was as honest as liberal, however, and, contrary to the expectation of his friends, died free from debt. He usually rose at five o'clock in the morning, and the hour was made known through the parsonage by his voice singing the Doxology of Ken:—

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

He lived constantly as at the gate of heaven, and about to enter it; standing in the midst of his household at the close of the morning devotions, he took formal leave of them as for the last time, with the benediction, "May God bless you in your souls, and in your bodies, and in all you put your hands to to-

day. Whether you live or die, may the Lord grant that you may live to Him, and for Him, and with Him for ever." He was a natural orator, and often sublimely eloquent, though always intelligible to the rude population around him. He was, says one who knew him well, "the most humble walker with Christ I ever met."* There was a sort of reckless and boundless generosity about his eccentric nature, and it infected and won all who approached him. Wesley and Whitefield often visited him; and on these occasions he rallied the population of all the neighbouring country. The prayers were read in the church, but as only a small portion of the assemblies could get within it, a platform was erected without for the preaching. The Lord's Supper was usually administered afterwards at the altar, the congregation filling the house repeatedly to receive it.

While Wesley was prosecuting his travels during the present period, Grimshaw encountered with him a severe assault from a mob. They rode to Roughlee; again and again were they stopped on the way by their friends, who entreated them not to proceed, for the rioters were rising at Colne to meet them. They pressed forward, however, and arrived at Roughlee before the mob appeared. Wesley says he was afraid for Grimshaw; but his apprehensions were unfounded, for the heroic curate was "ready to go to prison or death for Christ's sake." Wesley took his stand, and began to preach. Before he ended his sermon the mob reached the town, and came pouring down the hill-side like a torrent. He consulted with their leader, by whom he was borne off with Grimshaw to Barrowford, two miles distant, where "the whole army, led on with music, drew up in battle array" before the house in which they had been placed. On the way one of the rioters struck Wesley a severe blow in the face, another threw a stick at him, and another brandished a club over his head with threatening oaths. While the mob raged around the house the magistrate met Wesley and Grimshaw within, and endeavoured to extort from them a pledge that they would no more visit the neighbourhood. Wesley replied that he would sooner cut off his right hand than give the required promise. He and the magistrate went out at one door, Grimshaw and a friend at another; but the mob immediately crowded upon the latter, "tossed them to and fro with the utmost violence," and covered them with dirt and mire. Grimshaw was knocked down, but rose again and joined Wesley. At their request the leader of the mob undertook to conduct them back to Roughlee. They were

* Arminian Magazine, 1795.

followed by the rioters and pelted with stones and dirt. Wesley was once felled to the ground. Some quiet people, who were his friends, attempted to follow at a distance, in order to render him any aid that might be in their power, but they were driven away by a shower of stones. Some were trampled in the mire and dragged by the hair, others were struck with clubs. One was forced from a rock, ten or twelve feet high, into the river. Wesley and his companions reached Roughlee at last, and the next morning rode away; but one of their number was knocked from his horse while they were escaping. The news of their sufferings excited sympathy for them in the neighbouring towns. "At Widdop," says Wesley, "it made us all friends;" and the same day he addressed at Heptonstall-bank a vast congregation, "serious and earnest." "I lifted up my hands," he says, "and preached as I never did in my life!"*

Charles Wesley travelled and preached during this period as diligently as John, making several excursions to the north of England, to Wales, and to Ireland. In Cornwall he was surprised, as had been his brother, at the salutary effects of Methodism among the mining population. They crowded the Gwennap amphitheatre to hear him. He examined the members of the society there separately, and found it in confirmed prosperity. "Their sufferings," he writes, "have been for the furtherance of the gospel. The opposers behold and wonder at their stedfastness and godly conversation."† Four exhorters had been raised up among them. "Both sheep and shepherds," he adds, "had been scattered in the late cloudy day of persecution, but the Lord gathered them again, and kept them together by their own brethren, who began to exhort their companions, one or more in every society." At a still later date he says of Cornwall:—"The whole county finds the benefit of the gospel. Hundreds who follow not with us have broken off their sins, and are outwardly reformed; and though persecutors once, will not suffer a word to be spoken against this way." At St. Ives he writes that "the whole place is outwardly changed. I walk the streets scarce believing it is St. Ives. It is the same throughout all the country. All opposition falls before us, or rather is fallen, and not suffered to lift up its head again." At Sithney fierce persecution had prevailed against the society, and women and children had been struck down and beaten in the streets; now one hundred of the former rioters gathered about him to fight for him against a threatened mob from a neighbouring town. At St. Just the society had

* Journal, anno 1748. † Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 13.

been overwhelmed by repeated riots. A clergyman, who was also a magistrate, was the instigator and his brother the captain of the mob. During eighteen months the rabble had raged and apparently conquered all before them. Methodist preaching had been entirely suppressed in the town, but Charles Wesley now began it again by "crying in the street to about a thousand hearers, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?'" No voice was raised against him. "The little flock," he writes, "were comforted and refreshed abundantly. I spake with each of the society, and was amazed to find them just the reverse of what they had been represented. Most of them had kept their first love, even while men were riding over their heads, and they passed through fire and water. Their exhorter appeared a solid, humble Christian, raised up to stand in the gap and keep the trembling sheep together. Here is a bush in the fire, burning, and yet not consumed! What have they not done to crush this rising sect? but, lo, they prevail nothing! For one preacher they cut off twenty spring up. Neither persecutions nor threatenings, flattery nor violence, dungeons nor sufferings of various kinds, can conquer them. Many waters cannot quench this little spark which the Lord hath kindled; neither shall the floods of persecution drown it."

Leaving Cornwall, he went with Edward Perronet, a son of the vicar of Shoreham, to the north of England. Young Perronet, who afterwards entered the Methodist ministry, was initiated, during this excursion, into the persecutions and other trials of an itinerant preacher's life. Though mobs had subsided at their former centres, they still broke out occasionally with fierceness in other places. Perronet, however, showed good courage, and sometimes intercepted blows and missiles aimed at Wesley by receiving them himself. On their route they saluted Grimshaw, who was sick; "his soul," writes Wesley, "was full of triumphant love. I wished mine were in its place. We prayed believingly that the Lord would raise him up again for the service of His Church." They visited Newcastle and most neighbouring towns, preaching in the new chapels, in cockpits, in the streets, and in the fields, and witnessing almost everywhere the prosperity of their cause. From Newcastle they passed into Lincolnshire. At Grimsby they were attacked by a mob of "wild creatures, who ran about the room striking down all they met." The uproar lasted nearly an hour. Several caught at Wesley to drag him down. He put his hand on the leader of the riot, "who sat down like a lamb at his feet," and the rest soon fell upon each other and fought them-

selves out of the house, leaving the preacher to proceed with his discourse. At Darlaston, the scene of former and terrible riots, he preached before a house which had been pulled down by the mob. "The persecutors in this place," he writes, "were some of the fiercest in Staffordshire. I saw the marks of their violence, and thereby knew our people's houses as I rode through the town. Their windows were all stopped up. The Word was a two-edged sword. The ringleader of the mob was struck down and convinced of his lost estate. I preached again with double power."

Joined by Rev. Mr. Meriton, they set out for Bristol. At Devizes they were assailed by a terrific mob, in the midst of which the parish clergyman was conspicuous as a chief actor. It was a day, writes Wesley, never to be forgotten. The rioters broke open and ransacked a dwelling, searching for him and his companions. They were in another house, where, however, the mob soon gathered; during four or five hours the storm raged. The mayor rode out of the town in sight of the rioters, thereby indirectly encouraging them. His wife, however, sent her maid to Wesley, entreating him to escape disguised as a woman. Her heart had been touched by the conversion of her dissipated son, who had intended to desert his home for the seas, but had been reclaimed by the Methodists of the town, and was now a member of their society. Wesley declined the doubtful mode of escape which she proposed; and meanwhile the mob brought an engine, and, breaking in the windows, flooded the rooms, and spoiled the goods of the house. They demanded that Wesley should be delivered up to them, to be thrown into the horse-pond. A leading member of the society was dragged away and cast into it, and was saved from death only by the courage of one of his brethren, who ran through the mob into the water and rescued him. The tumult raged more and more around the house; the rioters got upon the roof and were tearing up the tiles; "we saw not," says Wesley, "any possible way of escape;" but when the rabble seemed on the point of breaking into the dwelling, their most "respectable" leaders became alarmed for the consequences and deterred them. After a cessation of an hour or two the tumult was renewed, and more than a thousand men joined in the assault. The horses of the preachers were driven into the pond, and left up to their necks in the water. The house was again attacked front and rear. "Such threatenings, curses, and blasphemies," writes Wesley, "I had never heard." He recalled the Roman senate, sitting in the forum, when seized by the Gauls, but told

his companions there was a fitter posture for Christians. They should be taken on their knees. They knelt down and waited in prayer, believing they should "see the salvation of God." "They were now," he writes, "close to us on every side, and over our heads untiling the roof. We expected their appearance, and retired to the furthermost corner of the room, and I said, 'This is the crisis.' In that moment Jesus rebuked the winds and the seas, and there was a great calm." It lasted three-quarters of an hour before any person came to inform them of the reason of the sudden change. A constable then appeared, demanding a pledge that they would visit the place no more. It was manfully refused; but they were conducted through the mob out of the town, and went on their way rejoicing to other fields of conflict and conquest.

In a few months Charles Wesley was traversing Ireland, and, before the Conference of 1750, he repeated his visit. He met there, as will hereafter be shown, outrages similar to those he had so successfully braved in England, but succeeded in planting Methodism in many parts of the island.

Amid these scenes of labour and strife, the Wesleys enjoyed not a few reliefs and consolations. They had established their cause throughout the land, and it had already visibly changed the moral aspect of much of the nation, elevating the most degraded classes of its population. Tens of thousands, rescued from virtual heathenism, blessed them as they passed along their extended ministerial routes. They had, connected with their principal chapels at London, Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle, and other places, preachers' houses or parsonages for themselves and their assistants, which, if destitute of every luxury, were, nevertheless, comfortably furnished, and supplied with books. They cultivated the tastes of scholars. Charles was habitually indulging his love of lyric poetry; he composed immortal odes as he rode along the highways from town to town, and mob to mob, and published several volumes during the present period. John, though preaching twice or thrice a-day, beginning at five o'clock in the morning in winter as in summer, and travelling, mostly on horseback, at a rate more than equal to the circumference of the globe every five years,* remarked that few men enjoyed more solitude than himself. He read continually as he journeyed, not only in theology, but still more in his favourite studies of history, antiquities, and the classic poets. Both the brothers had hitherto, with brief exceptions, enjoyed good health. Charles found relief to his con-

* He travelled five thousand miles a-year.

stitutional sadness in habitual travel. John, after one or two attacks of illness, was confirmed by the same salutary means in almost unvarying bodily vigour* and mental serenity. He assures us, about this time, that ten thousand cares were of no more inconvenience to him than so many hairs on his head, and his continually changing intercourse with families on his routes had become to them a welcome occasion, not only of religious instruction but of refreshing cheerfulness. A contemporary, who was both an eloquent scholar and a good man, and knew Wesley for more than twenty years, says that his countenance as well as conversation expressed an habitual gaiety of heart, which nothing but conscious virtue and innocence could have bestowed—that he was, in truth, the most perfect specimen of moral happiness he had ever seen, and that his acquaintance with him taught him better than anything else he had "seen, or heard, or read, except in the sacred volume, what a heaven upon earth is implied in the maturity of Christian piety."† Extremely economical, the limited means of the brothers met all their wants. A bookseller valued their publications at this early period at £2500. Perronet, of Shoreham, says this was not half their value.‡ The growth of Methodism had unexpectedly opened an indefinite market for their literary works. Such, however, was Wesley's charitable use of this source of income, that it is estimated he gave away in the course of his life more than thirty thousand pounds; and such, meantime, was his Christian, not to say philosophic simplicity and frugality, that when, by order of Parliament, the Commissioners of Excise sent out circulars, demanding from families an account of their taxable plate, and addressed him a letter, saying, "We cannot doubt that you have plate for which you have hitherto neglected to make an entry," his laconic reply was, "I have two silver teaspoons at London, and two at Bristol; this is all the plate which I have at present, and I shall not buy any more while so many around me want bread."§ In his Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, he had said: "Hear ye this, all you who have discovered the treasures which I am to leave behind me; if I leave behind me ten pounds (above my debts and my

* His severest sickness was during the next year.

† Alexander Knox, Esq. See his "Remarks," addressed to Southey, on Wesley's Life and Character: Appendix to Southey's Wesley. See also Knox's allusions to Wesley in his "Thirty Years' Correspondence with Bishop Jebb." Knox says Wesley was always the presiding mind at dinner parties, as well by the good humour as the good sense of his conversation.

‡ Letter to Madam Gwynne. Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 16.

§ Moore's Life of Wesley, chap. vii. sec. 3.

books, or what may happen to be due on account of them), you and all mankind bear witness against me that I lived and died a thief and a robber." The state of his affairs at his death, nearly half a century after, fully verified this pledge.*

The Wesleys found domestic shelter not only at their "Preachers' Houses," but in many comfortable homes among their people; and at Shoreham with Perronet; at Bexley with Piers, its Methodist vicar, under whose roof they wrote many publications; at Haworth with Grimshaw, and occasionally with Lady Huntingdon at Donnington Park. In Wales they were entertained at the opulent mansion of Marmaduke Gwynne, a magistrate of Garth. His princely establishment usually comprised, besides his nine children and twenty servants, a chaplain, and from ten to fifteen guests. The inmates of the household formed a good congregation in the domestic worship, and the Wesleys preached to them daily while seeking repose amid their liberal hospitality. Mr. Gwynne zealously promoted their peculiar views. He was one of the first influential citizens of Wales who had befriended Howell Harris in his evangelical labours. When Harris was first expected to preach near Garth, Mr. Gwynne was determined to arrest him, not doubting from the current reports that he was a madman, or "an incendiary in Church and State." He went out with the Riot Act in his pocket, but said to his lady as he left her, "I will hear him for myself before I commit him." The sermon, however, was so orthodox and powerful that the magistrate was deeply affected, and "thought the preacher resembled one of the apostles." At its conclusion he stepped up to Harris, took him by the hand, and, expressing his favourable disappointment, asked his pardon, bade him God-speed among the people, and, to the surprise of the assembly, invited him to accompany him back to Garth to supper. The principality owes to his munificent zeal much of the evangelical improvement which Methodism, Calvinistic and Arminian, has effected

* Wesley was a good example of "systematic beneficence." He remarked, in early life, that he had known but four men who had not declined in religion by becoming wealthy: later in life he corrected the remark, and made no exception. He himself, therefore, guarded scrupulously against the danger. When his own income was but £30 a-year he gave away £2; when it was £60 he still confined his expenses to £28, and gave away £32; when it reached £120 he kept himself to his old allowance, and gave away £92. The last insertion in his private journal, written with a trembling hand, reads thus: "For upward of eighty-six years I have kept my accounts exactly. I will not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the continual conviction that I save all I can and give all I can; that is, all I have. J. Wesley, July 16, 1790."

among its population.* He travelled with and protected the evangelists, and his name is printed in Wesley's early Minutes as a lay member of one of his Conferences.

On the 8th of April, 1749, Charles Wesley married Sarah Gwynne, a daughter of this excellent family. The good vicar of Shoreham had advised the marriage, and promoted it by letters to her parents. John Wesley approved it, and consecrated the ceremony. He describes the scene in his Journal as one "which became the dignity of a Christian marriage." Charles said his brother "seemed the happiest person among us." Their union was in all respects a fortunate one; neither of the parties ever had any reason to regret it. They established a comfortable, but simple home at Bristol, where Mrs. Wesley hospitably entertained the lay preachers on their journeys; and, notwithstanding her cultivated tastes, learned to admire as among the noblest of men, Nelson, Downes, Shent, and their heroic fellow-labourers.† To the end of her life, it is said, she spoke with emotion of these humble, but, in many respects, genuinely great and apostolic evangelists. Her religious temper was in harmony with that of her husband. She often accompanied him in his ministerial travels. She was not only admired, but beloved, by her humbler sisters of the societies, and throughout her husband's life rendered his home a sanctuary of repose from his labours, and of sympathy for his affections.

John Wesley himself found it not impossible, at this stage of Methodism, to hope for the blessed consolations of conjugal life. He had designed to marry, in 1749, Mrs. Grace Murray, his housekeeper at Newcastle, a lady every way fitted for him. She was, however, previously engaged to John Bennett, one of his lay preachers, and, by the counsels of Charles Wesley, Whitefield, and others, adhered to her first engagement. Wesley felt profoundly his disappointment,‡ and afterwards contracted a marriage which was the severest misfortune of his life.

* "The authority and countenance of Mr. Gwynne and his family now became highly important to the cause of religion."—Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, etc., chap. 7.

† Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 16.

‡ The anonymous author of "Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon" (vol. i. chap. 3) says of Grace Murray that "she possessed superior personal accomplishments, with a mind cultivated by education, and an imagination brilliant and lively in the highest degree. She was employed by Mr. Wesley to organize his female societies, and for this purpose she travelled through various parts of both England and Ireland. Mr. Wesley used to call her his right hand."

CHAPTER III.

INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM INTO IRELAND.

Religious Problem of Irish History—Wesley comprehended it—Bishop Berkeley on Irish Evangelization—Wesley arrives at Dublin—His views of the Irish Character—Charles Wesley in Ireland—Mobs and Murders in Dublin—"Swaddlers"—Power of Methodist Music—Second Visit of John Wesley—He itinerates in the country—Second Visit of Charles Wesley—Riotous Persecutions at Cork—Presentment by the Grand Jury against Charles Wesley—Triumphs of Methodism—Singular Conversions—John Smith at Glenarm—Persecution and Death of John M'Burney—Hard Fare of the Preachers—Robert Swindells—Thomas Walsh—Sketch of his Life—His Conversion from Popery—His Biblical Learning—Instances of the Power of his Preaching—He is mobbed and imprisoned.

The religious condition of Ireland has been the most singular anomaly of European history since the Reformation. That great revolution had a more positive effect on Scotland than on England itself; on Ireland it had scarcely any other than a disastrous influence. Ireland refused the Reformation, and has ever since been blighted under the retributive consequences of its pertinacious adherence to the Church of Rome. It is the only country, it has been said, in which the Reformation produced nothing but evil.* Its obstinate tenacity for Popery prevented its assimilation with the rest of the empire, and thence have chiefly arisen those abuses in its political administration which have filled its history with oppression, tumult, and wretchedness. These have again exasperated and confirmed its Papal proclivities, and have thus acted and reacted in its continual degradation.

Wesley on his first visit to Ireland comprehended the problem of its religious history; he observed that at least ninety-nine in a hundred of the native Irish remained in the religion of their forefathers. The Protestants, whether in Dublin or elsewhere, had almost all been transplanted from England. "Nor is it any wonder," he adds, "that those who are born Papists generally live and die such, when the Protestants can find no better ways to convert them than penal laws and acts of Parliament."†

Twelve years before Wesley's arrival, an Irish Protestant prelate published a work‡ in which he suggested, as the best

* Southey's Life of Wesley, chap. 23.

† Journal, August 15, 1747.

‡ Berkeley's Querist. Southey's Wesley, chap. 23.

means for the conversion of the country, substantially the same measures which Methodism provided—Lay instructors taken from the common people, and thereby better able to reach them. The clerical gradations of the Church of Rome, from cardinals down to mendicants, suited, he remarked, her ministrations to all ranks of men; her poor clergy were very useful in missions, and of "especial influence with the people;" and he asked the questions whether, in default of abler missionaries, persons conversant with low life, and speaking the Irish tongue, if well instructed in the first principles of religion and in the Popish controversy, though for the rest on a level with the parish clerks or the schoolmasters of charity schools, might not be fit to mix with the poor illiterate natives, and bring them over to the Established Church; whether it were not to be wished that some parts of the Liturgy and Homilies should be publicly read in the Irish language, and whether with these views it might not be desirable to train up some of the better sort of children in the charity schools to be missionaries, catechists, and readers.*

If the progress of Methodism has not been as rapid in Ireland as elsewhere, notwithstanding its adaptation in these respects, the fact is owing mostly to temporary and political causes, which have perpetuated to our day the resentments and Papal prejudices of the people. It is claimed, however, by Methodist writers, that it is doubtful whether even the forms of Protestantism would at this day be extant in most of the country, had it not been for the energy which was infused into the Irish Protestant Churches by Wesley and his associates,† so universally enfeebled and tottering was the Establishment in Ireland at that time. With the political reliefs and social ameliorations of the island, Methodism has been obtaining ampler sway, and its history is important for at least its prospective results.

* Southey admits "that what Berkeley desired to see, Methodism would exactly have supplied, could it have been taken into the service of the Church; and this might have been done in Ireland, had it not been for the follies and extravagances by which it had rendered itself obnoxious in England at its commencement." The latter remark is altogether gratuitous. It was not the "follies," or rather what Southey considers the "follies of Methodism," that repelled it from the Church in England. The Wesleys and Whitefield were excluded from the pulpits of the Establishment before they adopted out-door preaching, or any other novelty which Southey would call a "folly." The zealous and home-directed style with which they preached the doctrines of the English Articles and Homilies arrayed the clergy and churchwardens against them, and this opposition compelled them to their "follies and extravagances," so called.

† Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley, chap. 15.

Wesley arrived in Dublin on Sunday the 9th of August, 1747. The bells were ringing, and he went immediately to St. Mary's Church, and in the afternoon, by arrangement with the curate, preached to "as gay and careless a congregation" as he had ever seen. The curate treated him politely, but was immovably prejudiced against his employment of lay preachers, and assured him that the archbishop was equally opposed to so extraordinary a novelty. Wesley sought the archbishop, and had an interview with him ten miles from the city. Two or three hours were spent in the consultation, during which the prelate advanced, and Wesley answered "abundance of objections." Had Berkeley been the bishop, Methodism would probably have taken possession of the Church. Wesley gives us no information of the result of the interview; he immediately began, however, his usual course of independent labours.*

A lay preacher from England, Thomas Williams, had formed a society in Dublin in 1747.† Wesley found in it nearly three hundred members. He examined them personally, as was his habit in the principal societies at London, Bristol, and Newcastle; for none of his "assistants" or successors has been more minute and faithful in such pastoral labours.‡ He found them "strong in faith," and admired their docile and cordial spirit. He pronounced the Irish the politest people he had ever seen. "What a nation," he exclaims, "is this; every man, woman, and child, except a few of the great vulgar, not only patiently, but gladly suffers the word of exhortation." He had not yet fully learned their character; the "roaring lion," as he afterwards found, "shook himself here also."

He preached repeatedly and without molestation at the society's chapel, which had been a Lutheran church. The house and its yard were crowded with respectful hearers; many wealthy citizens were present, and his reception contrasted strikingly with what it had been in most places in England. "If," he wrote, "my brother or I could have been here for a few months, I question if there might not have been a larger society in Dublin than even

* Journal, August 11, 1747.

† Myles's Chronological History, p. 56.

‡ Smith (History of Methodism, book ii., chap. 3) says, "The steady and zealous attention of Wesley to the character, conduct, and spiritual state of the individual members of his societies is truly remarkable. In 1745 he examined the society in London one by one, and wrote a list of the whole with his own hand, numbered from one to two thousand and eight. In 1746 he repeated this operation, and wrote another list, in which the number was reduced to one thousand nine hundred and thirty-nine."

in London itself." The excessive cordiality of the people soon became a reason of some solicitude to him; "on that very account," he says, "they must be watched over with the more care, being equally susceptible of good or ill impressions." Having spent two weeks among them he preached his farewell discourse to an immense assembly, many of whom could not hear him, and took passage for England on Sunday, the 23rd of August.

In about two weeks, Charles Wesley arrived in Dublin, accompanied by Charles Perronet, another of the sons of the Shoreham vicar, and remained more than half a year in the country. During the brief interval since the visit of his brother, the "roaring lion" had raged in Dublin. A Papist mob had broken into the chapel, and some store-houses which appertained to its premises, destroying furniture, stealing goods, making a bonfire of the seats, window cases, and pulpit in the streets; wounding with clubs the members of the society, and threatening to murder all who assembled with them. It was, in fine, a thoroughly Irish riot, bristling with shillalahs and triumphant with noise. The mayor was disposed to protect the Methodists, but was powerless before the great numerical force of their persecutors. The grand jury threw out bills brought against the rioters, and thus gave indirect encouragement to their violence. Wesley met the society privately, but was followed through the streets to his lodgings by a retinue of the rabble, who complimented him with shouts of derision.

John Cennick had preached a Christmas sermon in Dublin on "the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." A Popish hearer, who knew little or nothing of his Bible, deemed the text a ridiculous Protestant invention, and called the Methodists "Swaddlers," a title which was immediately adopted by the mob. "Swaddler! swaddler!" was shouted against Wesley by the children in the streets. "The word," he says, "sticks to us all, not excepting the clergy."* He faced the persecutors with his usual courage. Meeting privately with the society, and weeping with and comforting them, he went forth also daily to the public parks, and preached the Word amid shouts and showers of stones. After having been more than a week in Dublin, struggling daily against the fiercest odds, he writes: "Woe is me now, for my soul is wearied because of the murderers which the city is full of." The mob, he says, seldom parted without killing one or more persons. A Methodist was knocked down, cut severely in several places, and thrown into a cellar, where stones were cast

* Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 14.

upon him. One of Cennick's Calvinistic brethren, a feeble man, was so abused by his neighbours, who prostrated and stamped upon him, that he died. The murderers were tried, but acquitted, "as usual," says Wesley. A woman was beaten to death by the rioters in one of the open-air assemblies. A constable, who was present to protect him, was knocked down, dragged on the earth till dead, and then hung up with triumph, and no one was called in question for the deed. Wesley himself was in the midst of perils, but escaped without a blow, except once, when he was stoned through the length of a street or two, and though screened by young Perronet, who interposed his own person as a shield for him, was struck by a missile. Their firmness, however, could discourage even an Irish mob. They were heard at last on the public green with quiet; and Wesley was able finally to record that never had he seen a more respectful congregation at the Foundry in London than at the Dublin green and in the society meetings at night. The Word, he writes, came with power irresistible, and the prayers and sobs of the people often drowned his voice. Additions were almost daily made to the band of converts, and the "bulk of the communicants" at St. Patrick's were usually Methodists, led forward to the altar by Wesley himself. He preached continually, and sometimes five times a-day. He collected subscriptions, and erected a better house of worship, and addressing the afflicted but growing company of believers for the last time before they left their chapel in Marlborough Street, he encouraged them from the appropriate text: "These are they that came out of great tribulation." It was, he writes, a day of "solemn rejoicing in hope of His coming to wipe all tears from our eyes." Thus, while the gospel reclaimed them, did persecution bind them together in common sympathy under their common sufferings, and augment among them the fervour, simplicity, unworldliness, and mutual tenderness, which marked so distinctly the primitive character of Methodism, compelling even their enemies to wonder, and exclaim, See how these Christians suffer and love!

Several preachers had been sent out into the country, and news came of great "awakenings" in various places. Wesley set out for the interior. He heard the Methodist tunes sung or whistled by Catholic children on his route.* At Tyrrell's Pass

* The Wesleyan singing was a source of great power to early Methodism. Charles Wesley's hymns, with simple but effective tunes, spread everywhere among the societies; and hundreds of hearers who cared not for the preaching, were charmed to the Methodist assemblies by their music. It secured

the town crowded out to hear him. "Never," he writes, "have I spoken to more hungry souls. They devoured every word. Some expressed their satisfaction in a way peculiar to them, and *whistled* for joy. Few such feasts have I had since I left England. It refreshed my body more than meat or drink. God has begun a great work here. The people of Tyrrell's Pass were wicked to a proverb—swearers, drunkards, Sabbath-breakers, thieves, etc., from time immemorial. But now the scene is entirely changed. Not an oath is heard, nor a drunkard seen among them. They are turned from darkness to light. Near one hundred are joined in society, and following hard after the pardoning God." At Athlone he was mobbed and struck with a stone, while one of his companions was knocked from his horse, and severely wounded. The mob had been roused by a Roman priest; many Protestants turned out in favour of the Methodists, and the encounter became so perilous that the dragoons had to interfere. Wesley walked through the agitated mass to the market-house, but it could not accommodate a third of his hearers. He took his stand, therefore, in the window of a dilapidated building, and proclaimed his message to them. At Moat he preached amid weeping listeners, while the mob threw stones, and tried to drown his voice with drums. At Phillipstown he was welcomed by a party

them much success among the susceptible Irish. A curious example of its power is told by one of the Irish preachers. At Wexford the society was persecuted by Papists, and met in a closed barn. One of the persecutors had agreed to conceal himself within it beforehand, that he might open the door to his comrades after the people were assembled. He crept into a sack hard by the door. The singing commenced, but the Hibernian was so taken with the music, that he thought he would hear it through before disturbing the meeting. He was so much gratified that at its conclusion he thought he would hear the prayer also; but this was too powerful for him; he was seized with remorse and trembling, and roared out with such dismay as to appal the congregation, who began to believe that Satan himself was in the sack. The sack was at last pulled off him, and disclosed the Irishman, a weeping penitent, praying with all his might. He was permanently converted. (Arminian Magazine, 1781, p. 474.) Southey remarks that "this is the most comical case of instantaneous conversion that ever was recorded; and yet the man is said to have been thoroughly converted." A tavern-keeper, relishing music, went to one of the meetings merely to hear the singing. He was afraid of the preaching, and that he might not hear it, sat with his head inclined, and his fingers in his ears. But a fly lit upon his nose, and at the moment he attempted to drive it away with one of his hands the preacher uttered with power the text: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. The word took hold upon the publican's conscience, and he found no relief till he became a converted man. (Sketches and Incidents, etc., page 335.) Such anecdotes abound in the publications of Methodism, and are not without historical significance as illustrations of its *modus operandi*.

of dragoons, who "were all turned from darkness to light," and had been formed into a Methodist society. Returning to Dublin, he found that continual accessions were made to the society. His brother having arrived, Charles Wesley left for England with the benedictions of hundreds who had found his word "the power of God unto salvation." Methodism had entered Ireland never to be overthrown there.

John Wesley reached Dublin on his second visit, in company with his clerical friend, Meriton, and Robert Swindells, a lay preacher, March 8, 1748. He entered the new place of worship in Cork Street, while his brother was conducting the devotions of the society, and immediately proceeded to preach. But such was their joy on seeing him again among them, that, he writes, his "voice could hardly be heard for some time, for the noise of the people in praising God." He found nearly four hundred persons united in the fellowship of the Classes. He preached daily, beginning at five o'clock in the morning, a measure unheard of among the dilatory Irish, but successful wherever he went. He was undisturbed on the public green, for the Dublin mob had, at last, been conquered. He passed rapidly among the country towns. At Phillipstown he confirmed the society of Methodist dragoons, and preached in a street full of attentive hearers; at Tullamore, to most of the inhabitants of the place; at Clara, to a vast congregation, many being wealthy families in their coaches; at Athlone, from the window of the unoccupied house where his brother had stood, to an assembly immense but perfectly respectful. "I scarce ever saw," he says, "a better behaved or more attentive congregation. Indeed, so civil a people as the Irish in general I never saw, either in Europe or America." So large an assembly as he addressed there the next day had never, he says, been seen in Athlone, and most of them were Papists. He was still astonished at their Irish cordiality. "Most of the congregation," he says, "were in tears." Indeed, almost all the town appeared to be moved, being full of good-will and desires for salvation, but, he adds, "the waters spread too wide to be deep; I found not one under very strong conviction, much less had any attained the knowledge of salvation in hearing thirty sermons." He now, in fine, perceived the real Irish character, and formed no very sanguine hopes of the immediate success of Methodism, though he knew that, could it be generally established in the country, it would ultimately achieve there its noblest results. He was astonished at the simple frankness of his converts, and had some difficulty in restraining it within decorous

limits. Examining one of the classes, he says he found a surprising openness among them. He asked one of them in particular how he had lived in time past; the honest man spread abroad his hands and said, with many tears, "Here I stand a grey-headed monster of all manner of wickedness," "which," says Wesley, "I verily believe, had it been desired, he would have explained before them all." Much in the same manner spoke one who came from Connaught, but with "huge affliction and dismay."

Travelling rapidly from town to town he soon returned to Athlone, where he again addressed a vast congregation, most of whom were Romanists. Their priest came among them and drove them away before him like a flock of sheep. Wesley admired their friendly attention, but could perceive none of the profound effects which attended his discourses among the sturdier sinners of England. He therefore preached in the evening on a threatening text; a fact which, so far as can be traced in his journal, had occurred seldom, if at all, since his conversion in 1738. "I preached," he writes, "on the terrors of the Lord in the strongest manner I was able; but still, they who are ready to eat up every word do not appear to digest any part of it." At a subsequent visit he saw, however, some good results from his labours, for a society had been formed, and he preached in the market-place to a large congregation of Papists as well as Protestants. He describes them as "an immeasureably loving people," and it was difficult for him to escape from them. When he thought he had effectually done so he found, at a mile's distance from the town, a multitude awaiting him on a hill-top over which the road passed. They opened the way for him until he had reached their midst, then closed, and would not let him proceed till he had united with them in singing several verses. When he left, men, women, and children lifted up their voices and wept as he "never heard before;" his heart was touched by their affectionate simplicity; "yet a little while," he said, "and we shall meet to part no more, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever." At Tullamore the next day the people would not cover their heads in a hailstorm while he preached, though he requested them to do so. At Edinderry he found much good had been done by his lay assistants, but it was not as profound or vivid as he had expected. "I see," he remarks, "nothing yet but drops before a shower."

After spending three months in traversing Ireland, he returned to England. Numerous societies had been formed, and a corps of preachers distributed through the country. In about two

months Charles Wesley again visited Dublin, where the society had greatly prospered. He left it quickly for Cork, where the lay preachers had met with much success. He was astonished to observe the impression which they had produced. A visible reformation had taken place in the morals of the populace; "swearing was seldom heard in the streets," and the churches and altars were crowded, to the astonishment of opposers.* He took the open field and preached to ten thousand hearers, Protestants and Papists, high and low. Two hundred members were enrolled in the society, yet he had occasion to repeat his brother's complaint of the superficiality of their religious character, for "all seemed awakened, but not one of them justified." The door appeared wide open for him, however, and he writes that even at Newcastle the awakening had not been so general. The city clergy turned out to hear him with unexpected favour; he was astonished at his multitudinous congregations, but asked himself, "How few will own God's messengers when the stream turns?" He knew human nature too well to suppose that this hearty good will, natural as it was to the Irish character, could long resist the capricious mutability which is equally natural to it; and as soon as he began to gather genuine converts into the society, he prepared for the usual outbreaks of hostility. "Hitherto," he says, "they seem asleep, but the witnesses of Jesus are rising to rouse them."

Hardly had he returned to England when the storm gathered and burst over Cork. During about three months the mob, led on by a ballad-singer by the name of Butler, and indirectly sanctioned by the mayor, kept the city in excitement by a series of riots against the Methodists. Butler arrayed himself in a clerical gown, and with his ballads in one hand and the Bible in the other, went about pretending to preach against them. The excited people, armed with swords and clubs, fell upon them without mercy; men, women, and children were knocked down in the streets, and not a few of them dangerously wounded. Their houses were assailed; a member of the society, who was a well-known merchant, applied to the authorities for protection, but was sent away without redress; another member, whose house the mob were pulling down, ran to the mayor, who accompanied him to the spot, but amid the rioters cried out to the helpless Methodists, "It is your own fault for entertaining your preachers; if you will turn them out of your houses, I will engage that no harm shall be done, but if you will not you must

* Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. xv.

take the consequences." A respectable Methodist citizen replied, very relevantly, that this was extraordinary usage for a Protestant government; that had he a Roman priest saying mass in every room of his house, it would not be touched. The only response of the mayor was, that the priests were protected, but the Methodists were not. The crowd, hearing the reply, huzzaed, threw stones faster than ever, and attacked the house until midnight.

The pusillanimous conduct of the authorities continued to inspirit the mob. Butler ranged the streets, armed with ballads and the Bible, and followed by drunken throngs shouting "Five pounds for the head of a swaddler." An Amazonian woman, indignant at the cowardice of the magistrates, attempted to interfere, but was carried away and inclosed in Bridewell. Twenty-eight depositions were presented to the grand jury at the Assizes against these disgraceful proceedings, but they were all thrown out, and the jury made "a remarkable presentment," which still stands on the city records, and which declares that "we find and present Charles Wesley to be a person of ill fame, a vagabond, and a common disturber of his majesty's peace, and we pray that he may be transported." Nine of his associates were denounced in the same terms. All were preachers except one, whose crime was his hospitality in entertaining the itinerants. Butler and his crew were now more triumphant than ever; but at the Lent Assize all the preachers who were in the kingdom, or at least all who had been in Cork, presented themselves in a body before the court. They had now to deal with a higher authority, the king's judges. Butler was the first witness; to the question, What is your calling? he responded, "I sing ballads." "Here," exclaimed the judge, lifting up his hands indignantly, "here are six gentlemen indicted as vagabonds, and the first accuser is a vagabond by profession!" The second accuser replied he was "an anti-swaddler," and treated the court with such disrespect that he was ordered away for contempt. The preachers were triumphantly vindicated, but the reign of the mob was not over. John Wesley returned to Cork in 1750, and was assailed with terrible violence. The furniture, windows, and floor of the chapel were torn out and burned in the street. He went to Bandon to preach, but the Cork mob followed him thither in grand procession and hung him in effigy.* During nearly a week the rioters prevailed, unchecked if not encouraged by the mayor. They patrolled the streets with shouts and menaces, and one of them affixed an advertisement at the Exchange, subscribed with

* Moore's Life of Wesley, chap. vi. sec. 1.

his name, proposing assaults on the houses of "Swaddlers," or of any citizens who dared to entertain them. But the excitement exhausted itself at last; many of the soldiers in garrison at Cork attended the Methodist preaching; soldiers made staunch Methodist converts in those stormy days, and the mob became afraid of them. Butler then went to Waterford and raised similar riots there, but in a quarrel with his associates lost an arm, and lingered out the remainder of his life disabled and miserable.

John Wesley afterwards visited the city without molestation. Methodism took permanent root there; a spacious chapel was soon erected, and there are few places, says his Irish biographer,* where religion has prospered more than in Cork; "Being reviled for the name of Christ, the spirit of glory and of God has rested upon them, and many have been there the living and dying witnesses of the power of true religion." On a subsequent visit Wesley was received at the mansion-house by the mayor, and his presence was considered an honour to the city. So advanced, in fine, did Methodism become in its social position in Cork, that five years later Wesley dreaded that city as the Capua of his preachers.†

It spread, meanwhile, rapidly over the country. It was permanently founded about this time, not only in the three southern counties, but also among the mountains of Ulster, where it found sympathy, and wrought its usual good effects among the poorer classes of Protestants. Circuits were formed and regularly supplied, and several effective native preachers were raised up. The peculiar susceptibility of the Irish character afforded continually striking cases of conversion. "Are there any drunkards here?" cried an itinerant, as he preached amid a mongrel multitude. "Yes, I am one," replied a sobbing Irishman, who, returning intoxicated toward his home had stepped aside to the assembly, supposing it was witnessing a cock-fight, and from that day he was not only reclaimed from his long-confirmed vice, but became a genuine Christian.‡ Some poor natives who could not understand the English language of the itinerants, were awakened and effectually turned to a religious life by the force of their earnest manner of address. A deaf mute of the county of Antrim was thus reclaimed from a life of excessive profligacy in the twenty-fifth year of his age. He had been notoriously addicted to cock-fighting, horse-racing, drunkenness, and other vices, but became

* Moore's Life of Wesley, chap. vi. sec. 1. † Journal, anno 1755.
‡ Arminian Magazine, 1781, page 478.

an upright citizen, a devoted member of the Methodist society, and its successful promoter among his townsmen. Unable to speak the word of exhortation to his neighbours, he preached by his exemplary life, and whenever the preacher or class-leader was expected in the town, he watched for his arrival, and hastened from house to house to summon the people to the place of prayer. His business had required him to work on the Sabbath, but on becoming a Methodist he would no more do violence to the Lord's day. Unable to read, he nevertheless learned, by the aid of his Christian brethren, the precious promises, and their place in the sacred volume, and would often turn to them with "a wild screaming voice and floods of tears."*

In some towns Methodism secured a permanent lodgment in a most unexpected manner. John Smith, a zealous preacher, who had been rescued from desperate vices, felt "pressed in spirit" to preach in Glenarn, a neglected town among the mountains of the north. As he rode up to make his evangelical assault on the place, he met a young lady who was riding with a servant. In reply to his inquiries, she warned him that it was a very wicked community. "Are there no good men there?" inquired the Methodist. "Yes, there is one, William Hunter," was her only encouragement. Riding into the town, he inquired for the house of the one pious townsman. At the door he met a young woman, and directed his horse to be taken to the inn; "and tell every one you meet," he added, "that a visitor at your house has good news to tell all at seven o'clock." At the hour the house was filled. The eccentric evangelist was heartily welcomed by the warm-hearted Irishmen; they detained him nine days, preaching to them twice daily, and a society was then formed which continues to the present time. When he was about to depart, he had but threepence in his pocket. He asked his landlady what he was to pay for his horse? "Nothing, sir," she replied; "a gentleman has paid all, and will do so if you stay a month." The whole incident was genuinely Irish.†

Mobs, however, continued for some time to alternate with such semi-humorous scenes of Hibernian good nature, and they occasionally assumed a frightful and perilous severity. Another

* Arminian Magazine, 1794, page 439.

† Coke and Moore's Life of Wesley, chap. iii. sec. 1. This work must be distinguished from Moore's Life of Wesley, a later production, which does not contain the facts referred to. The zealous John Smith died in the faith in 1772. Myles (Chron. Hist.) says: "He was a remarkably useful man; many hundreds were converted by his instrumentality, upwards of twenty of whom became preachers."

of them at least was fatal, and afforded Methodism its first Irish martyr. John M'Burney deviated sometimes from his circuit to preach in the market-place at Clones. Many people attended, and much good was done; but the Papists took alarm, and, assembling the rabble, persecuted the assembly so violently that it was feared the worship must be abandoned, especially as no magistrate would interfere. When about to give up, a singular incident occurred to restore confidence to the worshippers. A veteran military pensioner astonished the preacher and his friends by taking his post at a tree in the market-place, musket in hand, and proclaiming, with a terrible oath, that he would shoot the first man who should pass the tree to disturb the meeting. He was a Scotchman, wicked, but with high hereditary notions of religious decorum, and good courage to maintain them. "His word," says a contemporary writer, "was certainly attended with power of some kind, for not one of the rioters, although they shouted from a distance, attempted to pass the prescribed limits." The staunch old soldier mounted guard at the tree regularly at every visit of the preacher for several weeks, until he had completely won the field. "What strange instruments," writes a Methodist preacher who recorded the case on the spot, "what strange instruments are sometimes raised up to prevent or defeat the designs of hell!"* But the cowed rioters sought revenge elsewhere. M'Burney attempted to preach near the neighbouring village of Enniskillen. While the congregation was singing, the mob, armed with clubs, rushed in, breaking the windows, and violently thrusting out men and women. The preacher was knocked down, and dragged on the earth; he lay for some time senseless under the blows of the rioters. On becoming conscious, he attempted to rise, but staggered, and fell again. A ruffian set his foot upon his face, swearing he would "tread the Holy Ghost out of him." "May God forgive you; I do," exclaimed the sufferer, as soon as he could speak. He was then placed upon his horse, and one of the rioters mounting behind him, drove him impetuously down the mountain side to the town, where he was rescued by a hospitable citizen. Preaching as long as he had strength, and rejoicing that he had been counted worthy to suffer for Christ, he died at last of the injuries thus received, and claims in the history of Irish Methodism the honourable rank accorded to Thomas Beard in that of England.

Notwithstanding their frequent riots, Wesley always contended that the Irish were the politest people he had ever met,

* Life of Rev. Henry Moore, page 48.

and that in their wretched cabins could be seen as thorough courtesy as at the courts of London or Paris. "The damp, dirty, smoky cabins of Ulster," said one of the preachers, "were a good trial; but what makes double amends for all these inconveniences to any preacher who loves the Word of God is, that our people here are in general the most zealous, lively, affectionate Christians in the kingdom." "I had many an aching head and pained breast," wrote another, "but it was delightful to see hundreds attending to my blundering preaching with streaming eyes and attention still as night."*

Methodism won many converts from Popery, and from among them secured one of its most distinguished early preachers, an extraordinary man, whose name, fragrant with saintly associations, still lingers as a household word among its families in both hemispheres. While Robert Swindells, a devoted lay preacher,† who, as we have seen, accompanied Wesley to Ireland in 1748, was addressing a large congregation on the parade-ground at Limerick in 1749, a young man who had been trained a strict Roman Catholic, but whose intelligent and melancholy aspect betrayed an unsettled and inquiring mind, took his stand amid the throng, attracted among them not more by the novelty of the scene than by the hope that some words appropriate to his religious anxieties might be uttered by the humble preacher. The needed word was uttered, for the text of the itinerant was, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Twenty years later John Wesley wrote, respecting this Irish youth, that he knew a young man who was so thoroughly acquainted with the Bible, that if he was questioned concerning any Hebrew word in the Old or any Greek in the New Testament, he would tell, after a brief pause, not only how often the one or the other occurred in the Bible, but what it meant in

* Southey's Wesley, chap. 23.

† Swindells was one of Wesley's best lay itinerants; he began to preach in 1741, and died in the itinerancy in 1783. (Myles's Chron. Hist. of the Methodists, page 297.) In the obituary of the Minutes for 1783, Wesley says: "He had been with us above forty years; he was an Israelite indeed. In all these years I never knew him to speak a word which he did not mean, and he always spoke the truth in love. I believe no one ever heard him speak an unkind word. He went through exquisite pain (by the stone) for many years, but he was not weary. One thing was almost peculiar to himself, he had no enemy; so remarkably was that word fulfilled, 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.'" (Arminian Magazine, 1784, page 621.) Besides his connection with the conversion of Thomas Walsh, this good man did important service for Methodism in Ireland. He deserves a fuller notice, but I have been unable to find any available records for it.

every place. Such a master of Biblical knowledge he says he never saw before, and never expected to see again. His name was Thomas Walsh. His parents were rigorous Romanists; when a child they taught him the Lord's Prayer and the Ave Maria in Irish (his native tongue), and also the 100th Psalm in Latin. He learned English in his eighth year, and afterwards the Latin grammar, under the tuition of his brother, a school teacher, designed for the Papal priesthood, but who, by reading the Scriptures, had discovered reasons for abandoning the faith of his family. Young Walsh, whose temper was constitutionally serious, if not melancholy, had deep religious solicitudes in his childhood. He describes himself as often terrified by his apprehensions of death and the future state, and as strict in his religious exercises; but "a small part of them only was addressed to God, the rest to saints and angels."* From his fourteenth to his sixteenth year he was more than ever devoted to the requirements of his faith, particularly the Mass. He was scrupulous against most ordinary vices, especially profanity, except the petty forms of it, with which the native Irish language abounds more than any other tongue. Meanwhile, his religious impressions deepened, and became intense. "The arrows of the Almighty," he says, "stuck fast in me, and my very bones trembled because of my sins." He confessed to his priest, who advised "many prayers," but seemed not to comprehend his case. He strove to divert himself by recreations, but "a hell," he says, "opened in my breast." He fasted rigorously and prayed incessantly, and in his agony sometimes threw himself upon the ground, tearing the hair from his head. He records, with morbid scrupulosity, his failings and sins: the confessions of Augustine scarcely surpass these brief records in candour and compunction; yet he says he "was as one who beateth the air," as he had not the Bible to instruct him.

In his eighteenth year the conversations of his brother led him to serious doubts respecting the pretensions of Popery. It had afforded his awakened mind no satisfactory relief, and his intelligence revolted from its manifest absurdities. In an appointed interview with his brother and other Protestant friends, at which the Bible and Nelson's "Feasts and Fasts of the Church of England" were consulted and discussed till midnight, he was constrained, he says, "to give place to the light of truth." About one o'clock in the morning he returned to his lodgings, fell upon

* Life of Thomas Walsh, composed in great part from his own accounts, by James Morgan.

his knees, and for the first time prayed to God alone. No saint or angel was ever again invoked by him, for he was now convinced that "*there is but one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.*" He resolved, he says, to suffer no man to beguile him again into a voluntary humility in worshipping either saints or angels. His father attempted to reclaim him, but could not answer his arguments. His candid reading of the Scriptures entirely overthrew the sophisms by which the invocation of saints and the other errors of Popery were sustained. His quick, discerning intellect was surprised at the total absence of any intimations of these errors in the divine records.

He formally abjured the creed of his family, and united with the Established Church. But his sincere heart was full of charity; he speaks of the Papists in language which is unusual to such converts: "I bear them witness," he writes, "that they have a zeal for God, though not according to knowledge. Many of them have justice, mercy, and truth, and may (notwithstanding many errors in sentiment, and therefore in practice, through invincible ignorance), be dealt with accordingly, since as is God's majesty so is His mercy." He believed that after his enlightenment he could not be saved among them, but that earnest men who had not been thus convinced, would be accepted of God in their communion; and he dismisses the subject with a pathetic prayer in their behalf, which might well be substituted for much of the severity and dogmatism with which they are commonly treated. His renunciation of Popery relieved him of many superstitious troubles of mind, but deepened his religious anxiety. His conscience, he says, still condemned him; "There was no rest in my bones, by reason of my sin." It was in this state of mind that he heard Robert Swindells proclaim on the parade-ground at Limerick, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden."

The evangelical itinerants soon penetrated to his native village of Newmarket. He welcomed them and joined the little Methodist society there; and now, he says, a purer light began to dawn upon him, for he saw not his "guilt only, but the all-sufficiency of Christ." The itinerants, true to the genius of Methodism, wrangled not about ecclesiastical or dogmatical questions with even Papists, but proclaimed the vital doctrines of personal religion. In one of their assemblies, "I was divinely assured," he says, "that God for Christ's sake had forgiven me all my sins; the Spirit of God bore witness with my spirit that I was a child of God. I broke out into tears of joy and love;" and a friend by his

side received the same consolation at the same hour.* He lived now, writes his biographer, as in another world. A more saintly life than he exemplified from this time down to his death cannot be found in the records of either Papal or Protestant piety. The life of Thomas Walsh, says Robert Southey, "might, indeed, almost convince a Catholic that saints are to be found in other communions as well as in the Church of Rome." He saw in Methodism a genuine reproduction of the apostolic Church, and he gave himself to study that he might the better promote its marvellous mission. Besides his native Irish language, he mastered the English, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; the latter was especially a sublime delight to him, as the tongue with which God himself had originally spoken to man. He rose at four o'clock, and continued to do so the remainder of his life, to study it, and he read it often upon his knees. "O truly laudable and worthy study!" he exclaims, "whereby a man is enabled to converse with God, with holy angels, with patriarchs and prophets, and clearly to unfold to men the mind of God from the language of God!" He believed even that a divine inspiration helped him in these sacred studies; and such was his success with them, that probably no man ever excelled him in the knowledge of the Word of God. His memory was a concordance of the entire Bible. No Catholic saint ever pored more assiduously or devoutly over his Breviary than did this remarkable man over the original Scriptures during the rest of his life. His studies were intermixed with ejaculations of praise and supplication. "Turning his face to the wall, and lifting up his heart and countenance to heaven, with his arms clasped about his breast, he would stand for some time before the Lord in solemn recollection, and again return to his work.† Meanwhile his cry was, "I fain would rest in Thee! I thirst for the divine life. I pray for the spirit of illumination. I cast my soul upon Jesus Christ, the God of glory, and the Redeemer of the world. I desire to be conformable unto Him, His friend, servant, disciple, and sacrifice!" Such was this good, this sublime man, a noble trophy won by the illiterate preachers of Methodism from the abject superstitions of Popery. In reading the brief record of

* Southey (chap. xxiii.) refers to the passage of Scripture at the utterance of which Walsh's mind was relieved, as affording to the psychologist "a curious illustration of Methodist conversions." It was, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah; this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?" Southey was evidently ignorant of the evangelical application which commentators and Walsh himself gave to the sublime text.

† Life, etc., chap. xii.

his life, we seem to have before us a combination and impersonation of the Hebraic grandeur of the old prophets, the mystic piety of the Papal saints, and the Scriptural intelligence and purity of Protestantism.

He contemplated with a sentiment of awe the responsibility of the Christian ministry, and entered upon it with a trembling hesitancy and humility. "Lord Jesus!" he prayed in view of it, "Lord Jesus, I lay my soul at thy feet, to be taught and governed by Thee. Take the veil from the mystery, and show me the truth as it is in Thyself; be Thou my sun and star by day and by night." Once in the ranks of the lay ministry no contemporary member of it became more eminent for zeal, labours, or sufferings. He walked thirty miles to his first appointment, which was in a barn, and amid the contradictions and mockery of some, and the tears of others, preached with an effect that demonstrated the genuineness of his mission. He proclaimed his message with remarkable power every day for some weeks at Limerick; and his awakened hearers sometimes could not be induced to leave the spot where they heard him till they received the peace of God. He went like a flame of fire through Leinster and Connaught, preaching twice and thrice a day, usually in the open air. Multitudes of all denominations attended his ministrations, and before long he was known all round the country. His command of the Irish tongue gave him great advantage with the native Papists. They flocked to hear their own rude but touching language; they wept, smote their breasts, and invoked the Virgin with sobbing voices, and declared themselves ready to follow him as a saint over the world. The beggars would gather around him as he passed, and, melting under his words, would kneel down in the streets and weep and pray. A Papist who had saved his earnings to leave to a priest or friar, for masses for his soul when he should be dead, called upon Walsh, begging him to take the money and the responsibility of praying his soul out of purgatory. "No man can forgive your sins," said the preacher; "the gift of God cannot be purchased with money; only the blood of Christ can cleanse from sin." The astonished Romanist was deeply affected, and cried earnestly to God, while Walsh knelt by his side, and prayed for him in Irish. A native, with whom he was conversing in English, became enraged at his religious warnings, and declared that "although he should be shot for it he would have satisfaction," adding, with an oath, "thou shalt never deceive another, for I am resolved to be the death of thee just now." Walsh immediately reproved him in Irish. "Why didst thou not speak so to me in the beginning?"

exclaimed the excited man. "The lion became a lamb," says the preacher, "while I let him know in Irish what Christ had done for sinners. He departed with a broken heart."* When preaching in Irish, hearers who did not understand his speech were, nevertheless, sometimes smitten by his earnest and affecting manner, and an instance is related of a man who, hearing him in Dublin, was thus "cut to the heart."

It is admitted that no man contributed more than Walsh to the diffusion of Methodism in Ireland.† The Roman priests were alarmed at his success, and instigated mobs against him. On his way to Roscrea he was assailed by seventy-eight men armed with clubs; he was surprised at their illogical but Hibernian generosity, for they proposed to bring a clergyman of the English Church and a Roman priest to convert him to either faith, as he pleased, and then to let him depart in peace. He told them that he came not to discuss opinions, but to preach against the wickedness of any or all parties. This seemed incomprehensible to them. They, nevertheless, offered him his liberty if he would swear not to come to Roscrea again; but he would have suffered martyrdom rather than make such a pledge. They hurried him away, therefore, raging like wild beasts, to put him into a well, which they had secured for the purpose; but his calm and courageous bearing excited the admiration of some of the mob, and while one party cried vehemently that he should go into the water, another swore he should not. The parish minister interfered, and had him taken to an inn. The mob brought him out again, and it being market day, he bravely took his stand among the throng in the street and began to preach; but some of the crowd seizing him by the back, hurried him out of the town. He at last got upon his horse, and, taking off his hat, prayed for some time in their midst, and then addressed them in a persuasive exhortation. "I came off from them at length," he writes, "in peace of conscience and serenity of mind." They had not conquered him; he resumed his labours in the town, and Methodism was securely planted there.

He travelled towards Cork, proclaiming the gospel as he went. In a town near that city, sergeants, sent by a magistrate, arrived to seize him as he was about to preach beneath a tree. He

* "It is an old maxim in Ireland," says Southey, "When you plead for your life, plead in Irish." "It has a peculiarly affecting impressiveness, particularly with reference to the things of God." Morgan's Life of Thomas Walsh.

† Southey's Wesley, chap. 23.

opened his Bible at the text, Job xxi. 3: "*Suffer me that I may speak, and after that I have spoken, mock on.*" The officers, interested at first by the singularity of the text, and afterwards by his eloquence, heard him attentively through the sermon. They then conducted him to the magistrate, who demanded a promise that he would preach there no more. He asked if there were no swearers, drunkards, and Sabbath-breakers in the town. "There are," was the reply. He refused to give the required promise, but intimated that if no reformation ensued among such offenders after he had preached there a few times, he would trouble them no more. This, however, was not satisfactory, and he was sent away to prison. The whole town seemed moved on his behalf, for his remarkable character and talents impressed all who heard him. Several persons accompanied him into the prison, where they spent the time in singing hymns. The inhabitants of the town sent bedding and provisions for him, and he preached to a multitude without, which extended as far as his voice could reach through the grated window. He afterwards revisited the place repeatedly, as he had declared he would; and years later, his biographer records that there were yet remaining on the spot living fruits of his labours and sufferings. In the north of Ireland he was still more severely treated by Protestant assailants; his life was periled several weeks with a fever, occasioned by exposures in his attempt to escape his Christian persecutors.

His name became well known among the Roman Catholic churches throughout the country. The common people would hear him notwithstanding the remonstrances of their priests, and many were turned not only from Popery, but from flagrant vices to repentance and a holy life. All kinds of derogatory reports were spread abroad to deter them from his preaching. In Clonmel the priest assured his congregation that the eloquent itinerant had been a servant boy to a certain priest, and that having stolen his master's books, he had by that means learned to preach, and was now availing himself of his newly-acquired art for a better living. At Cork the Papists crowded to hear him, and many were converted; the priests were greatly irritated, and one of them affirmed publicly that, "as for that Walsh, who had some time before turned heretic, and went about preaching, he had been dead long ago, and he who then preached in this way was the devil in his shape." Such was the only manner in which they could account to the ignorant multitude for the power of his discourses. The people, nevertheless, ran after him, and wept and cried aloud under his word as he proclaimed it on

mountains and highways, in meadows, private houses, prisons, and ships. They often followed him when the sermon was concluded, begging for further instruction. They would come to his rooms to entreat his counsels and prayers, and kneeling down under his exhortations, would begin to call with tears upon the Virgin and Apostles, till he could check them and teach them better.

As it was Wesley's habit to transpose his preachers often, Walsh was sent to London, where he did much good among his Irish countrymen. He addressed them in their own language in Moorfields and at Short's Gardens, and they crowded to hear their native tongue so eloquently used. He preached constantly twice a-day, and with such fervour that one of his intimate friends says it is scarcely possible to enable a stranger to conceive of the glow of his soul, and the energy of his spirit on these occasions; "such a sluice of divine oratory ran through the whole of his language as is rarely to be met with."* Wesley called him "that blessed man;" "wherever he preached," he adds, "the Word, whether in English or Irish, was sharper than a two-edged sword. I do not remember ever to have known a preacher who in so few years as he remained upon earth was an instrument of converting so many sinners."† In London he had frequent discussions with the Jews. He attended their synagogues, and his intimate knowledge of Hebrew enabled him to reason with them out of their own original Scriptures.

During nine years did this remarkable man pursue his tireless and luminous course. It was closed at last, as we shall hereafter see, by a death of singular mental anguish, but final triumph, presenting a startling lesson well worthy the study of the best of men.

The Methodist itinerants in Ireland, visited frequently by the Wesleys, and stimulated, if not, indeed, led on, by this talented and flaming native preacher, planted their cause in most of the country. It was destined to pass through many vicissitudes, and to show its energy at times as much by endurance as by progress; but its root struck ineradicably into the soil, and it is not perhaps too much to say that it saved Protestantism in many parts of the island. Persecutions subsided; Wesley in later life was received with veneration as an apostle; "the scandal of the cross," he wrote, "has ceased, and all the kingdom, rich and poor, Papists and Protestants, behaved with courtesy, nay, with good-will." He rejoiced at last over a larger society in Dublin than anywhere

* Morgan's Life of Walsh, chap. 15. † Myles's Chron. Hist., page 64.

else in the United Kingdom, except London. He directed his course towards the island always with a peculiar interest, and the time he spent there in his numerous visits amounted to at least six years.

CHAPTER IV.

LABOURS OF THE CALVINISTIC METHODISTS: 1744—1750.

Whitefield's third Visit to America—His dangerous Sickness in Maine—Testimonials against him—His Success—The Cape Breton Expedition—His Reception at Philadelphia—Singular Religious Interest in Virginia—Maryland—He goes to Bermuda—He embarks for England—Labours of Howell Harris—The Countess of Huntingdon travelling in Wales—Whitefield arrives in London—Rev. John Newton—Whitefield in Scotland—His Travels in England—Remarkable Conversion—Bishop Lavington's Attacks—Charles Wesley and Whitefield preaching amid the Alarms of Earthquakes in London.

While Wesley and his Arminian colabourers were successfully spreading Methodism during the present period, Whitefield and the other Calvinistic agents of the movement were hardly less active. Whitefield re-embarked for America in August, 1744. He arrived at York, Maine, in disabled health, after a passage of eleven weeks. Three weeks he lingered between life and death, but preached repeatedly, though he had to be carried like a child. After one of his sermons, he was taken home and laid near the fire; his friends wept around him, and he heard them say, "He is gone." He supposed himself dying, but "recollecting," he says, "the life and power which spread all around, while expecting to stretch into eternity, I thought it was worth dying for a thousand times."* The venerable Moody, pastor of York, still remembered for both his piety and his humour, attended him, and welcomed him in the name of "all faithful ministers in New England." But on arriving at Boston he found the good pastor's welcome not entirely verified. Harvard College had issued a "testimony" against him, and not a few clergymen opposed him in a similar manner. Hostile "testimonies," signed by ministers, came out almost every day.† Fifteen pastors, assembled at Taunton, Massachusetts, published a testimony in his favour. "But," he writes, "amid all this smoke, a blessed fire broke out; the

* Philip's Life and Times of Whitefield, chap. 14.
† Gillies's Memoirs of Whitefield, chap. 12.

awakened souls were as eager as ever to hear." He was admitted, though with reluctance, to the pulpits of Coleman, Sewall, Webb, and Gee. He began to expound at six o'clock in the morning, as he had done in Scotland, and though this hour was now before full daylight in that latitude, he usually had two thousand hearers. He found occasion also to rejoice over the results of his former labours. Twenty pastors, at least, acknowledged that they had not been converted till he came among them. Tennent had been abroad itinerating since his last visit, and so extensive had been the "awakening," that many supposed the latter-day glory had come, and that a nation was to be born in a day. Fanatics marred the good work, and hence the reaction at Harvard College and elsewhere.

Whitefield's presence and eloquence could not long be resisted anywhere. Some favourable incidents also occurred to help him at this visit. An accomplished wit of the city used to entertain convivial parties over the bottle with scraps from his sermons, and imitations of his manner. He was present in the church one day to get new specimens, but when supplied could not make his way out through the crowd. The Word, meanwhile, took effect on his conscience. He went afterwards to one of the city pastors, "full of horror;" and seeking Whitefield, begged his pardon. Other equally remarkable conversions deepened the popular interest. The expedition against Cape Breton was preparing in the city; such, at last, was Whitefield's power over the populace, that Sherburne, one of the commissioners, insisted on his favouring it publicly, as "otherwise the serious people would be discouraged from enlisting." He gave them a motto for their flag,* after "which great numbers enlisted." They wished him to become one of their chaplains, but he had better work. He preached a sermon to them, and sent them to the North with the enthusiasm of crusaders. In six weeks news came of the fall of Louisburgh, when he delivered a thanksgiving sermon to a great multitude, who flocked from all quarters. The spirit of the Puritan commonwealth still survived in New England, and Whitefield evidently relished it.

He had now reconquered the people, if not their pastors. It was proposed to build him "the largest place of worship that was ever seen in America," but he left them for other fields: for the eastward as far as Casco Bay; for Cape Cod, as far as North Yarmouth; for Rhode Island and Connecticut; preaching twice a-day to thousands. "And though," he writes, "there was much

* *Nil desperandum, Christo duce:* Fear nothing while Christ is Captain.

smoke, yet, every day I had more and more convincing proof that a blessed gospel fire had been kindled in the hearts of both ministers and people."

At Philadelphia he was heartily welcomed. The society which occupied the house that had been erected for him at his former visit, wished to settle him there, and offered him a salary of four hundred pounds per annum, and half the year for his itinerant labours. He found that his previous visit had left a profound effect; Gilbert Tennent's "feet were blistered" in walking to and fro visiting the awakened.*

He was gratefully surprised on reaching Virginia to learn that a volume of his sermons had produced an extraordinary religious interest. A gentleman who had obtained a copy invited some of his neighbours to hear them read at his house. Soon it could not accommodate the throng who gathered for the purpose every Sunday, and they erected a "meeting-house merely for reading." No one dared to offer public prayer on these occasions, as none had ever been accustomed to do so; yet deep religious convictions spread among them, and "they could not keep from crying out and weeping bitterly." The reader was invited abroad with his volume, and the "awakening" extended to several towns. Tennent and Blair visited them soon after; a pastor by the name of Robinson took charge of them for some time, and in 1747 there were four chapels in the neighbourhood of Hanover which had sprung from this singular excitement.†

Whitefield passed on rapidly to his Orphan House at Bethesda, near Savannah, but paused not long there. Returning northward, his preaching was attended with great success in Maryland. "The gospel is moving southward," he writes; "the harvest is promising; the time of the singing of birds has come." His travels in that region, including some excursions into Pennsylvania, comprised three hundred miles. "Thousands and thousands are ready to hear the gospel," he says, "and scarce anybody goes out but myself. Now is the time for stirring!" It is not surprising that when he arrived in Philadelphia again he wrote that he had almost continually a burning fever. Yet he expresses great regret that he omitted preaching one night (to oblige his friends), and purposes

* Philip's Life and Times of Whitefield, chap. 14.

† Morris's Narrative. Philip's Whitefield, chap. 14. Samuel Morris was the gentleman who obtained and read the sermons. He and his associates were called Lutherans. They were required by law to attend the Established Church or take some dissenting designation. They knew not at first what title to assume, but at last chose the great Reformer's name.

to do so once more, that they might not charge him with self-murder. "But," he adds, "I hope yet to die in the pulpit, *or soon after I come out of it.*" They were prophetic words.

At New York he preached with his usual power and success, and wrote, "I shall go to Boston as an arrow from a bow, if Jesus strengthen me." He was soon there, and found all opposition subdued. He wrote to Tennent that "the arrows of conviction flew and stuck fast," and that he was "determined to die fighting, though it be upon his stumps." This was enthusiasm, doubtless, but it was such enthusiasm as makes heroes. The world disdains it nowhere but in religion, where it is most befitting and most needed. With Whitefield it was no spasmodic impulse; it had lasted now more than ten years, and was to sustain him in scarcely diminished labours during a quarter of a century more, till, in accordance with his expressed hope, he should descend from the pulpit to die.

He travelled during the first tour of his present American visit about eleven hundred miles; but we cannot trace, by the slight data that remain, his repeated excursions northward and southward. They were, however, incessant. His passage among the colonies seemed as the flight of an archangel, beheld with delight and awe by the wondering people.

In 1748 he departed for the Bermudas on account of his health. Before leaving he wrote from North Carolina:—"I am here hunting in the woods, these ungospelized wilds, for sinners. It is pleasant work, though my body is weak and crazy." "Pray for me," he adds, "as a dying man; but O pray that I may not go off as a *snuff*. I would fain die blazing, not with human glory, but with the love of Jesus." But never did "a dying man" seek health as did Whitefield among the Bermudas. He spent more than three months on the islands, preaching almost daily twice or thrice, sometimes in the churches, sometimes in the open air. One week, he says, it being rainy, he preached only five times in private houses; "'faint, yet pursuing,' must be my motto yet." He was entertained with much respect and hospitality by the island dignitaries, civil and clerical, and the common people soon appreciated his remarkable talents with enthusiasm, as they had done wherever he had been. The churches were crowded, while hundreds usually thronged about the doors and windows. There was a visible improvement in the people from Sabbath to Sabbath; they were "affected as in the days of old at home." One week he preached, besides the Sabbath services, two funeral sermons and five discourses in private houses. He went, in fine, from

island to island, church to church, house to house, labouring as if the judgment-day were immediately to be revealed; and when he preached his farewell sermon, the whole audience wept aloud, as if parting from an old and endeared pastor. He could hear the crowd of negroes outside sobbing with grief, and wept himself, unable to resist the general and contagious sorrow. "Surely," he exclaimed, as he left them, "a great work has been begun in some souls at Bermuda." A hundred pounds were spontaneously raised for his Orphan House, and the ship in which he departed was supplied by the grateful islanders with a superabundance of provisions for his comfort on the passage. He had extended the movement of Methodism to these isles of the sea; in a few years more Wesley's assistants were to follow him, and to spread it through all the British colonies of the West Indies. He embarked for England in June, 1748.

Meanwhile Howell Harris was pursuing his missionary itinerancy in Wales. "He was," says Wesley, "a powerful orator, both by nature and grace; but he owed nothing to art or education."* He was also an apostle in labours, travels, and trials. Persecutions and mobs opposed him in Wales, as they had Wesley in England. In Brecknockshire and Carmarthenshire especially, the Methodists "were hunted like partridges." Harris gives an account of a single "round" of his travels in South and North Wales, in which he had gone, during nine weeks, over thirteen counties, travelled one hundred and fifty miles each week, and preached twice a-day, and some days three or four times; in this journey he had not taken off his clothes for seven nights together, being obliged to meet the people, and preach at midnight, or very early in the morning, to avoid persecution. Many of his followers were carried before the magistrates, and fined for assembling together. Near the town of Bala, where he was almost murdered at a former visit, he was again attacked, and struck on the head with a stone, but escaped unhurt. "I never," he writes, "saw such crowds come to hear. Many hearts and doors have been opened lately."†

In May, 1748, Lady Huntingdon started on a tour through Wales, accompanied by two noble but devout women, Lady Anne and Lady Frances Hastings. They were met at Bristol by the leading Welsh evangelists, Howell Harris, Griffith Jones, Daniel Rowlands, and Howell Davies. They journeyed by brief stages,

* Journal, anno 1756.

† Letter of Howell Harris. Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, chap. 7.

stopping at almost every village for a public religious service. Two of the preachers proclaimed the Word every day as they went, and thus scattered the seed of the truth over a large range of the country. At Trevecca, afterwards noted as the seat of her "school of the prophets," she passed several days. Some eight or ten clergymen and lay evangelists met her there, and preached four or five times daily to great congregations, gathered from all the surrounding country. "The influence of the Spirit of God," writes Lady Frances Hastings, "was evidently afforded with his Word, and many were added unto the Lord."† Rowlands' sermons seem especially to have been attended with extraordinary effect; immense assemblies were moved by the truth, as a forest by the wind, and prayed aloud for the Divine mercy. The societies were encouraged and fortified by this seasonable visit. "On a review of all I have heard and seen during the last few weeks," wrote the Countess on her return, "I am constrained to exclaim, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless His holy name!' Many on these solemn occasions, there is reason to believe, were brought out of nature's deepest darkness into the marvellous light of the all-glorious Gospel of Christ."

She arrived in London with Howell Harris and Howell Davies in time to receive Whitefield, who, after an absence of four years, reappeared among his old friends flaming with unabated zeal. He was received with enthusiasm, and the Tabernacle was soon again thronged. John Newton, one of the ministerial notabilities of the last century, and the well-known friend of Cowper, describes the scene there as quite marvellous. He used to rise at four o'clock in the morning to hear the great orator at his five o'clock service, and says he has seen Moorfields as full of the lanterns of the worshippers before daylight as the Haymarket was full of flambeaux on opera nights. "I bless God," he adds, "that I have lived in his time."

He now began his chaplaincy at Lady Huntingdon's residence, but could not long be content with the city. In September, 1748, he departed on his third visit to Scotland, Bateman, the Methodist vicar of St. Bartholomew's, and both the Wesleys, supplying his place at the Countess's mansion till his return. His zeal and eloquence again prevailed against all opposition in the North. Two synods and one presbytery discussed the propriety of discountenancing him. All unfavourable rumours were canvassed before them, but only to his advantage, for a more disinterested, guileless man than Whitefield never lived. At Edin-

* Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, chap. 6.

burgh and Glasgow he was greeted by congregations almost as vast as had gathered about him at Moorfields and Kennington Common. Grateful groups came to inform him of his former usefulness in their conversion. At Cambuslang the old scenes of interest were revived. The pertinacious "Seceders" still complained that he did not "preach up the Solemn League and Covenant." "I preach up the covenant of grace," replied Whitefield, and sped his way, superior to all partizan and polemic strifes.

He returned to England, where he was attended by his old triumphs. There was, he wrote to Lady Huntingdon, a great stirring among the dry bones at Bristol and Kingswood. At Plymouth, the scene of former persecutions, a "tabernacle" had been built for him, and the city "seemed quite a new place." Kinsman, afterwards distinguished in England as a successful evangelist, was one of his converts there. A youth had climbed a tree to hear and mimic him. Whitefield, attracted by his outrages, cried, "Come down, Zaccheus, come down, and receive the Lord Jesus Christ." The appeal was effectual, and the young man became not only a convert but a zealous preacher.

At Tavistock he was mobbed. A bull and dogs were brought and set upon the assembly while he was praying. He prevailed over the rabble, however, and delivered his message. At Exeter, a persecutor came to the field-preaching with his pocket full of stones to throw at him; he stood with one in his hand, ready for the convenient moment, but the Word struck his conscience; he dropped his missiles, and made his way to the preacher, contritely acknowledging, "Sir, I came here to break your head, but God has broken my heart." He became a genuine Christian and an ornament to the Church.*

Having traversed the west of England to the extent of six hundred miles, spreading through all his course a marvellous sensation, he returned to London in March, 1749. He and Wesley now exchanged pulpits. They were bound together by their common Christian spirit, their common success, and their common persecutions. It was about this time that Lavington, Bishop of Exeter, sacrificed the dignity of his office by assailing them with merciless severity in his pamphlet, entitled, "The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared," to which both the evangelists wrote replies. Soon after his elevation to the see of Exeter, Lavington delivered a charge to his clergy, which was said to reflect severely on the Methodists. A forgery, pretending

* Gillies's Whitefield, chap. 14.

to be this address, was printed in London. The prelate charged the counterfeit on the Methodist leaders in a public "Declaration." They denied it peremptorily, and its printer afterwards confessed the fraud, and exonerated them from any direct or indirect collusion with him. Lady Huntingdon communicated this confession to Lavington, and demanded a retraction of his Declaration. He treated her appeal with silent contempt till she threatened to make public the actual state of the case, when he sent her a note "apologizing to her ladyship, and the Messrs. Whitefield and Wesley, for the harsh and unjust censures which he was led to pass on them, from the supposition that they were in some measure concerned in and had countenanced the late imposition on the public." He even requested them to "accept his unfeigned regret at having unjustly wounded their feelings, and exposed them to the odium of the world."* This acknowledgment was not, however, made by him publicly, as it should have been, in order to counteract his hasty "Declaration." The Countess herself gave the recantation to the public. The bishop would not pardon this necessary act, and vented his indignation in relentless attacks on the Methodists. His tracts on their "Enthusiasm" exaggerated their real faults, and imputed to them many that were monstrous fictions. The historian of the times cannot show a greater kindness to his memory than to pass these flagrant publications with the least possible allusion. They are known in our day only by the triumph of the cause they impeached, a cause whose early incidental defects the Christian world is not willing to set off against its beneficent results.†

Whitefield could not remain long in London; he was feeble in health there, and soon unable to hold a pen. Again he started on his old routes. At Portsmouth he preached to a great assembly amid clamorous outcries; but before he closed the leader of the opposition was subdued, and "received him into his home with tears of shame and joy."‡ He passed into Wales, and had a triumphant progress through its towns and villages. "Jesus," he wrote, "rides on in the chariot of the everlasting gospel." He preached, mostly out of doors, in eight counties, and to more

* See his letter in Lady Huntingdon's Life and Times, chap. 7. "Such," says the author of this work, "was the recantation of this wily prelate, but it was only in the language of hypocrisy."

† Wesley showed his characteristic kindness of heart when, some years later, while at Exeter, he wrote in his Journal: "I was well pleased to partake of the Lord's Supper with my old opponent, Bishop Lavington. Oh may we sit down together in the kingdom of our Father!" (Journal, anno 1762.)

‡ Philip's Whitefield, chap. 16.

than a hundred thousand hearers. Throughout eight hundred miles he had conquered all opponents; "not a dog stirred a tongue." Magistrates and people beheld him with respect, if not with awe. Twenty thousand people were sometimes present, and many prayed and wept aloud under his sermons. "I think," he says, "we had not one *dry* meeting." Returning, he went to Exeter, not to answer Lavington's slanders, but to counteract them by the preaching of the gospel. He proclaimed it there in the fields with great power. At one of his sermons the prelate and some of his clergy stood near, gazing on an assembly of ten thousand of the common people, many of whom trembled under the Word, while others threw stones at the head of the preacher. He went into Yorkshire, and preached for Grimshaw at Haworth to six thousand hearers, and administered the Lord's Supper to a thousand. Wesley's preachers and people invited him to Leeds, where he addressed an assembly of ten thousand. Charles Wesley met him on the highway, and took him to Newcastle, where he preached repeatedly in the Wesleyan chapel, but finding the crowd too great turned out into the fields. Many were his converts through all these regions, some of whom afterwards laid the foundations of the dissenting churches which now flourish there.*

He returned frequently to London, where "thousands on thousands crowded to hear," and conversions were continually occurring. In the early part of 1750, repeated earthquakes alarmed the metropolis. Charles Wesley and Whitefield were in the city, and presented a sublime example of ministerial faithfulness amid the general trepidation. On the 8th of March, while the former was rising in the pulpit of the Foundry to preach, at five o'clock in the morning, the earth moved through all London and Westminster with a strong, jarring motion, and a rumbling noise like distant thunder. The walls of the Foundry trembled; a great agitation followed among the people: but Wesley cried aloud to them, "Therefore will we not fear though the earth be moved, and the hills be carried into the midst of the sea, for the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." His heart, he says, was filled with faith, his mouth with words, "shaking their souls as well as their bodies."† The subterranean shocks recurred during several days. Multitudes flocked to the early Methodist service in deep alarm. The Westminster end of the metropolis was crowded with coaches and people flying precipitately, and London "looked like a sacked city." Throughout

* Philip's Whitefield, chap. 16.

† Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 17.

a whole night many of the alarmed people knocked at the Foundry door, entreating admittance, though "our poor people," writes Wesley, "were calm and quiet as at any other time." During one of those terrible nights, Tower Hill, Moorfields, and Hyde Park were filled with lamenting men, women, and children; Whitefield stood among them in Hyde Park preaching at midnight. A deep moral impression followed these events. They gave origin to many tracts and sermons, and the courage and labours of the Methodist evangelists could not fail to secure the reverence of the people.

On the morning in which Charles Wesley stood preaching amid the trembling walls of the Foundry, John Wesley assembled the Conference of 1750 in Bristol, a date at which opens a new period of our narrative.

CHAPTER V.

DEVELOPMENT OF OPINIONS AND ECONOMY BY THE CONFERENCES, FROM 1745 TO 1750.

The Conference of 1745—Its Composition—Its Theological Discussions—Is the Witness of the Spirit invariable in Conversion?—Sanctification—Terrible Preaching—Church Government—Wesley's High-Church Views—Lord King's Primitive Church—Wesley still designed not to form a permanent Sect—The Session of 1746—Laymen admissible—Progress of Opinion—Faith and Works—Necessity of the Lay Ministry declared—Its Divine Right acknowledged—Ordination anticipated—Exhorters recognized—Importance of Local Preachers and Exhorters—First List of Circuits—Session of 1747—Its Members—Private Judgment and Free Discussion—Relation of Faith to Assurance—Correction of Wesley's Opinion on the Subject—Cautions respecting Sanctification—What is a Church?—Divine Right of Episcopacy denied—Session of 1748—Number of Circuits—The Formation of Societies resumed—Conference of 1749—A Scheme of General Union—Assistants distinguished from Helpers—Quarterly Meetings ordered—Book Distribution—Session of 1750—Extraordinary Results of the first Decade of Methodism.

The second Conference was held in Bristol, August 1st, 1745. John Hodges, rector of Wenvo, Wales, was the only regular clergyman who was present besides the Wesleys. One layman, Marmaduke Gwynne, and seven lay preachers, Thomas Richards,

Samuel Larwood, Thomas Meyrick, James Wheatley,* Richard Moss, John Slocombe, and Herbert Jenkins, met with them. The deliberations related to questions of theology and church economy. As at the first Conference, all dogmatic subjects not immediately concerned in personal religion were avoided; Justification, Sanctification, and the Witness of the Spirit were especially discussed. It was asked, Is assurance absolutely necessary to our being in the favour of God? or may there possibly be some exempt cases? We dare not positively say there are not, was the answer.† "Is it indispensably necessary to final salvation? Suppose in a Papist, or in general among those who never heard it preached? Love hopeth all things. We know not how far any of these may fall under the case of invincible ignorance. Does a man believe any longer than he sees a reconciled God? We conceive not. But we allow there may be infinite degrees in seeing God, even as many as there are between him who sees the sun when it shines on his eyelids closed, and him who stands with his eyes wide open in the full blaze of his beams. Does faith supersede (set aside the necessity of) holiness or good works? In nowise; so far from it that it implies both, as a cause does its effect. When does inward sanctification begin? In the moment we are justified. The seed of every virtue is then sown in the soul. From that time the believer gradually dies to sin and grows in grace. Yet sin remains in him, yea, the seed of all sin, till he is sanctified throughout in spirit, soul, and body. Is it ordinarily given till a little before death? It is not to those that expect it no sooner, nor consequently ask for it, at least not in faith. But would not one who was thus sanctified be incapable of worldly business? He would be far more capable of it than ever, as going through all without distraction."

It was also asked whether some of the assistants did not preach too much on the wrath and too little on the love of God, and answered: "We fear they have leaned to that extreme, and hence some of their hearers may have lost the joy of faith. Need we ever preach the terrors of the Lord to those who know they are accepted of Him? No, it is folly so to do; for love is to them the strongest of all motives."

While the Conference thus avoided as much as possible unessential polemics—the polemics, however, which have most engrossed theological parties, and most distracted Christendom—it

* Wheatley's name is omitted by Smith. (Hist. of Meth.) Myles gives it. (Chron. Hist., page 34.)

† Minutes of the Wesleyan Conference, etc., vol. i., page 22. London, 1812.

showed a decided progress of opinion on ecclesiastical questions.* It was providential, perhaps, that Wesley's sentiments on Church order and ecclesiastical prerogatives were at first somewhat rigid, and known to be so, otherwise he might have suffered more seriously in his relation to the National Church, and swung away, with his increasing followers, into perilous ecclesiastical novelties and experiments. It was as providential, however, that with the advancing necessities of Methodism he was led to increasing liberality on such questions, until finally he was prepared, when the great exigency which required the special organization of American Methodism arrived, to practically disown the most important High-Church prejudices by the most important ecclesiastical act of his life—an act which has given to the world an example of Apostolic Episcopacy without the usual adventitious dignities or pretensions of Prelacy, or even a claim of Apostolic Succession, or of any scriptural or other authority higher than that of practical expediency itself.

At the present Conference it was asked, "Is not the will of our governors a law?" The answer was emphatic: "No; not of any governor, temporal or spiritual. Therefore, if any bishop wills that I should not preach the gospel, his will is no law to me. But what if he produce a law against your preaching? I am to obey God rather than man." To the question, "Is Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Independent Church government most agreeable to reason?" a reply was given which presents the true rationale of Church order. "The plain origin of Church government," says this answer, "seems to be this: Christ sends forth a preacher of the gospel. Some who hear him repent and believe the gospel. They then desire him to watch over them, to build them up in the faith, and to guide their souls in the paths of righteousness. Here, then, is an independent congregation, subject to no pastor but their own, neither liable to be controlled in things spiritual by any other man or body of men whatsoever. But soon after, some from other parts, who are occasionally present while he speaks in the name of Him that sent him, beseech him to come over to help them also. Knowing it to be the will of God, he consents, yet not till he has conferred with the wisest and holiest of his congregation, and with their advice appointed one or more who has gifts and grace to watch over the flock till his return.

* The bound, or "octavo Minutes," as they are usually called, contain only the theological part of the deliberations of this conference. For the remainder of its proceedings we are indebted to the "Disciplinary Minutes," lately discovered. See note on page 157.

If it please God to raise a flock in the new place before he leaves them, he does the same thing, appointing one whom God has fitted for the work to watch over these souls also. In like manner, in every place where it pleases God to gather a little flock by his Word, he appoints one in his absence to take the oversight of the rest, and to assist them of the ability which God giveth. These are deacons, or servants of the Church, and look on the first pastor as their common father. And all these congregations regard him in the same light, and esteem him still as the shepherd of their souls. These congregations are not absolutely independent. They depend on the pastor, though not on one another. As they increase, and as their deacons grow in years and grace, they need other subordinate deacons or helpers, in respect of whom they may be called presbyters or elders, as their father in the Lord may be called the bishop or overseer of them all. Is mutual consent absolutely necessary between the pastor and the flock? No question. I cannot guide any soul unless he consent to be guided by me. Neither can any soul force me to guide him if I consent not. Does the ceasing of this consent on either side dissolve the relation? It must in the very nature of things. If a man no longer consent to be guided by me, I am no longer his guide. I am free. If one will not guide me any longer, I am free to seek one who will. But is the shepherd free to leave his sheep, or the sheep to leave their shepherd? Yes, if one or the others are convinced it is for the glory of God and the superior good of their souls." The more direct question, How shall we treat those who leave us? was answered by the advice, first, "Beware of all sharpness, or bitterness, or resentment; second, Talk with them once or twice at least; third, If they persist in their design, consider them as dead, and name them not except in prayer."*

Notwithstanding the liberality of these views, Wesley still believed in the Apostolic Succession, in the priestly character of the Christian ministry, and the essential distinction of its three orders. He explicitly affirmed this belief in a letter written at the end of the present year.† His opinions, however, were evidently fast being unsettled by study and by the practical difficulties which they presented in the momentous work opening before him. In about three weeks after the letter alluded to, he recorded in his journal that he had recently read Lord King's "Account of the Primitive Church." "In spite," he says, "of the vehement

* Smith's History of Methodism, book ii. chap. 3.

† It is given in his Journal, 1745.

prejudice of my education, I was ready to believe that this was a fair and impartial draught; but if so, it would follow that bishops and presbyters are (essentially) of one order, and that originally every Christian congregation was a Church independent of all others." That irrefutable work made a profound impression on his mind, and, as we shall hereafter see, thoroughly dispelled his High-Church errors.

It is evident from the Minutes of this Conference that Wesley had as yet no settled purpose of maintaining a permanent organization of his followers. He still hoped that the general revival of religion would prepare the Established and Dissenting Churches to take charge of them, and obviate any such necessity. It was, therefore, suggested that his assistants should preach without forming any more new societies in large towns, particularly in Wales and Cornwall. In the preceding Conference, as has been shown, he opposed any unnecessary increase of the lay ministry; and declared that "its employment at all was allowable only in cases of necessity." In fine, the ambition of founding a new sect, so heedlessly imputed to him by some of his critics, had not entered his mind; his one purpose was the reformation of religion and morals throughout the land; and his policy, pertinacious even with High-Church prejudices, aimed to effect this reformation as far as was at all practicable within the pale and under the auspices of the National Church.

The third Conference assembled at Bristol on the 12th of May, 1746. John Wesley, Charles Wesley, John Hodges, Samuel Taylor, Jonathan Reeves, Thomas Maxfield, Thomas Westall, Thomas Willis, and Thomas Glascot were present. These annual assemblies were yet designed to be quite informal, and to include, besides regular clergymen and lay preachers, such prominent laymen as might be within convenient reach. At the preceding session Marmaduke Gwynne attended, as we have seen, and on the present occasion, to the question, Who are proper persons to attend any conference? it was replied, that, besides the preachers conveniently at hand, the most prudent and devoted of the band-leaders of the town where the session might be held, and any pious and judicious stranger who might be in the town, should be invited.*

The deliberations lasted but two days. They related, as at the previous sessions, exclusively to questions of personal religion and to ministerial arrangements. An important advancement in the theological development of Methodism was marked here. It

* "Disciplinary Minutes." Smith's History of Methodism, book ii. chap 3.

was asked, "Wherein does our doctrine now differ from that we preached when at Oxford?" and answered, "Chiefly in these two points: first, we then knew nothing of the righteousness of faith in justification; nor, second, of the nature of faith itself, as implying consciousness of pardon."

To the question, Is not the whole dispute of salvation by faith or by works a mere *strife of words?* it was answered: "In asserting salvation by faith we mean this: first, that pardon (salvation begun) is received by faith, producing works; second, that holiness (salvation continued) is faith working by love; third, that heaven (salvation finished) is the reward of this faith. If you, who assert salvation by works, or by faith and works, mean the same thing (understanding by faith the revelation of Christ in us, by salvation, pardon, holiness, glory), we will not strive with you at all. If you do not, this is not a *strife of words*, but the very essence of Christianity is the thing in question."*

Wesley's conviction of the importance and necessity of the lay ministry had been deepened since the last session. Providential circumstances every day rendered it more evident that the great religious interest which had begun in the land must be conducted forward chiefly by that agency, or be generally abandoned. Next to revelation itself, such providential indications were decisive of Wesley's judgment. The lay ministry was then God's own means, because the only means provided, for the prosecution of the growing work; but much discrimination was necessary to ascertain the fitness of untrained men for such a momentous responsibility. How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Spirit, and called of God to preach? was an anxious question asked at this session. Three tests were given in the answer: Have they grace, gifts, and fruits? "First, Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation? Second, Have they the gifts (as well as grace) for the work? Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound understanding? Have they a right judgment in the things of God? Have they a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly? Third, Have they fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin, and converted to God by their preaching?" "As long as these three marks concur in any, we believe," affirmed the Conference, "that he is called of God to preach. These we receive as a *sufficient*

* Minutes of the Wesleyan Conferences, etc., vol. i. page 29.

proof that he is *moved thereto by the Holy Ghost;*" a decision which has never been essentially modified by the rapid progress of ministerial improvement within the pale of Methodism, and which has incalculably tended to its success by the great variety and consequent adaptation and efficiency of the natural talent embodied in its ministry. Many directions, prescribing the studies and other habits of the lay ministry, were adopted at this session, but they will more appropriately come under consideration elsewhere.

It is evident, also, from the proceedings of this Conference, that though Wesley still believed, as he did through the rest of his life, in the *appropriateness* of ordination, and the usual orderly distinctions of the Christian ministry, *they were no longer essential requisites* in his estimation. His lay assistants were "moved of the Holy Ghost," and "called of God" to their work; they were, therefore, by Divine right as legitimate preachers of the Word as any priest or bishop of the land. Yet he did not ordain them, nor by analogous ceremony set them apart for their office; but with the reason assigned for this course was given also a distinct intimation that a more formal consecration might sooner or later become desirable. To the question why they did not use more form and solemnity in receiving a new labourer, it was answered that the Conference purposely declined it: "First, because there is something of stateliness in it; second, because it was not expedient to *make haste;* we desire barely to follow Providence as it gradually opens."* At a later date, as we shall see, Wesley did ordain some of his assistants.

We meet in the Minutes of this Conference with the first intimation of another class of lay labourers, which has since been of no small influence in the progress of Methodism. It was provided that none should be allowed to exhort in the societies without a note of authorization from the preacher, and that this license, as it has since been called, should be renewed once a-year. Thus arose the order of "Exhorters," a notable example of the manner in which Methodism appropriated all its resources of talent. The local ministry has usually graduated from the class of exhorters, and the itinerant ministry from the class of local preachers, while men incompetent for either of these two offices have remained with usefulness in the subordinate rank of exhorters. This process of graduation has always been a process of preparation. Thousands of able local preachers, whose modesty as laymen would never have allowed them to begin their

* "Disciplinary Minutes." Smith's History of Methodism, book ii. chap. 3.

ministerial labours in the pulpit, have effectually begun them in the vestry as exhorters; and hundreds of itinerants, whose ability for the pulpit would never have been otherwise ascertained, either by themselves or their brethren, have disclosed it in the humbler labours of the local ministry, and gone forth from them as high priests of the Church. The history of Methodism teaches few lessons more emphatically than the importance of maintaining these practical processes and distinctions, so effective in its past progress, and so evidently essential to its genius and destiny.

We have already seen that Wesley, observing the necessity of repeating his labours in any given place in order to secure permanent results, had resolved to "strike no blow which he could not follow up." From that time he endeavoured to methodize as much as possible the itinerant labours of both himself and his associates. The Minutes of the present Conference give us the first intimation of definitive circuits, though it is supposed they existed before.* The whole country was mapped into seven of these itinerant districts. Wales and Cornwall each constituted one. Newcastle, with doubtless many neighbouring towns, was another. That of Yorkshire included seven counties. London, Bristol, and Evesham were the head-quarters of others.

The fourth Conference assembled at the Foundry in London, on June 16, 1747, and was numerically the most imposing session yet held. Besides the Wesleys, their venerable chief counsellor, Perronet (vicar of Shoreham), Manning (vicar of Hayes), Bateman (rector of St. Bartholomew the Great in London, where Wesley now often preached), and Piers (vicar of Bexley), attended it. Howell Harris, the Methodist apostle of Wales, whose capacious soul suffered no loss of affection for Wesley by his alliance with Whitefield, was also a member. The other lay preachers present were Thomas Hardwick, Thomas Maxfield, John Bennett, John Downes, Thomas Crouch, Robert Swindells, and John Madden.†

The first question was how they should render the Conference "eminently" an occasion of "prayer, watching, and self-denial." They resolved to have a special care "always to set God before them," and to spend the intermissions of the sessions in devotions and in visiting the sick. The right of utterly free discussion, so distinctly stated in the first Conference, was asserted more em-

* Smith's History of Methodism, book ii. chap. 3.

† "Disciplinary Minutes." Smith's History of Methodism, book ii. chap. 3. The "Octavo Minutes" do not mention the names of the lay preachers (except Harris and Hardwick) nor Perronet.

phatically than ever. Unanimous agreement was pronounced desirable, but in speculative matters each, it was affirmed, could only submit so far as his judgment should be convinced; in every practical point, so far as would not wound his conscience. It was asked, "Can a Christian submit any further than this to any man or number of men upon earth?" "It is," they answered, "undeniably plain he cannot, either to pope, council, bishop, or convocation. And this is that grand principle of every man's right to private judgment in opposition to implicit faith in man, on which Calvin, Luther, Melancthon, and all the ancient Reformers, at home and abroad, proceeded. Every man must think for himself, since every man must give an account for himself to God."

Two important theological themes were discussed: the relation of Assurance to Faith in Justification, and the extent of Sanctification. It was admitted that justifying faith *is itself* a divine assurance, but not without evident hesitancy, as the Conference could not deny that some good men give abundant proof of justification while they deny assurance. "There may be exempt cases," say the Minutes; but they add, "it is dangerous to ground a general doctrine on a few particular examples."* To the question, What will become of them if they die in this state? it was replied, "This is a supposition not to be made. They cannot die in this state; they must go backward or forward. If they continue to seek they will surely find righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. We are confirmed in this belief by the many instances we have seen of such as these finding peace at the last hour; and it is not impossible but others may then be made partakers of like precious faith, and yet go hence without giving any outward proof of the change which God hath wrought." Wesley himself saw the vagueness and difficulty which prevailed in the deliberations on this subject, and in less than a month his reflections corrected his present opinion. In a letter to his brother he denies that "justifying faith is a sense of pardon." "Every one," he writes, "is deeply concerned to understand this question well, but preachers most of all, lest they should either make them sad whom God hath not made sad, or encourage them to say peace where there is no peace. Some years ago we heard nothing of justifying faith or a sense of pardon, so that when we did hear of them the theme was quite new to us; and we might easily, especially in the heat and hurry of controversy, lean too much either to the one hand or to the other. By justifying faith I mean that faith which, whosoever hath it not is under the *wrath*

* Minutes of Wesleyan Conferences from the first, etc., vol. i. page 34.

and the *curse* of God. By a sense of pardon I mean a distinct, explicit assurance that my sins are forgiven. I allow, first, that there is such an explicit assurance; second, that it is the *common* privilege of *real* Christians; third, that it is the *proper Christian faith* which purifieth the heart and overcometh the world. But I cannot allow that justifying faith is such an assurance, or necessarily connected therewith, because if justifying faith *necessarily* implies such an explicit assurance of pardon, then every one who has it not, and every one so long as he has it not, is under the *wrath* and under the *curse* of God. But this is a supposition contrary to Scripture, as well as to experience."* This matured view of the question he entertained during the rest of his life, but he always taught the blessing of assurance as the privilege and right of every true believer.

The doctrine of entire sanctification was unreservedly asserted, but with several important cautions against its imprudent treatment either in the pulpit or in personal life. To the question, suppose one had attained to this, would you advise him to speak of it? it was replied: "Not to them who know not God; it would only provoke them to contradict and blaspheme: nor to any without some particular reason, without some particular good in view; and then they should have an especial care to avoid all appearance of boasting, and to speak more loudly and convincingly by their lives than they can do by their tongues." It was asked, "Does not the harshly preaching perfection tend to bring believers into a kind of bondage or slavish fear? It does. Therefore we should always place it in the most amiable light, so that it may excite only hope, joy, and desire." It was further asserted that "we may continue in the joy of faith even till we are made perfect. Since holy grief does not quench this joy, and since even while we are under the cross, while we deeply partake of the sufferings of Christ, we may rejoice with joy unspeakable." These cautions were pushed even further. It was insisted that to "teach believers to be continually poring upon their inbred sin, is the ready way to make them forget that they were purged from their former sins. We find by experience it is so, or to make them undervalue and account it a little thing. Whereas, indeed (though there are still greater gifts behind), this is inexpressibly great and glorious."†

* Myles's Chron. Hist. of Methodism, page 54.

† By a singular error in the Bound Minutes (Minutes of the Methodist Conferences from the first, etc., London, 1812), the report on Sanctification numbered as pertaining to the next Conference, held in 1748. There are no

Of the discussions on ecclesiastical questions we have no traces in the current Minutes, but in the "Disciplinary Minutes" are evidences of important progress. The term *church* is asserted to mean in the New Testament "a single congregation."* A "national church" is pronounced "a merely political institution." It is conceded that the "three orders" of deacons, presbyters, and elders, obtained early in the Church, but are not enjoined in Holy Scripture; that uniformity of Church government did not exist till the age of Constantine, and was not taught by the sacred writers, for the reason that variety in ecclesiastical administration was necessary for the varied circumstances of different ages and countries. We have also positive proof that Wesley had abandoned his belief in the divine right of Episcopacy. He declares in these Minutes that it was not asserted in England till about the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign; and that till then all bishops and clergy in England continually allowed and joined in the ministrations of those who were not episcopally ordained. The arguments of the "Irenicum" and "The Primitive Church" had now evidently prevailed with him, and not these so much, perhaps, as the providential arguments afforded by the increasing exigencies of his great work, and by his growing catholicity. He still, however, repels the charge of schism. "You profess," continue these Minutes, "to obey both the rules and the governors of the Church, yet in many instances you do not obey them. How is this consistent? It is entirely consistent. We act at all times on one plain uniform principle. We will obey the rules and governors of the Church whenever we can consistently with our duty to God. Whenever we cannot, we quietly obey God rather than man. But why do you say you are thrust out of the churches? Has not every minister a right to dispose of his own church? He ought to have, but in fact he has not. A minister desires that I should preach in his church, but the bishop forbids him. That bishop then injures him, and thrusts me out of the Church." Still thus denied the churches, they resolved to limit less than ever their field-preaching; reasons were discussed for extending it, and after recording some sixty assistants as in the work, besides coadjutors among the regular clergy, they dispersed to exemplify these convictions in the length and breadth of the land.

Minutes whatever of that Conference except in the recently discovered "Disciplinary Minutes." See Smith's Hist., book ii. chap. 3. Myles (Chron. Hist.) gives it correctly.

* Smith's History of Methodism, book ii. chap. 3.

On the 2nd of June, 1748, the fifth Conference was held in the Tower Street Chapel, London.* John Wesley, Charles Wesley, William Felton, Charles Manning, Thomas Maxfield, John Jones, Thomas Meyrick, John Trembath, Edward Perronet, son of the vicar of Shoreham, Jonathan Reeves, Richard Thomas Bateman, John Green, William Tucker, Howell Harris, Samuel Larwood, James Jones, and William Shent were present. No theological question was examined, as the time was mostly employed in discussing the interests of Kingswood School. Nine circuits were reported: London with ten towns or counties, Bristol with thirteen, Cornwall with nine, Ireland with four, Wales with four, Shropshire with seven, Cheshire with five, Yorkshire with nine, and Newcastle with ten.

The Minutes of this session afford one, and but one, very important indication of the progress of Wesley's opinions respecting the distinct mission of Methodism. Taken in connection with his improved views on ecclesiastical questions, it has not a little significance. At a previous Conference it was resolved, as has been shown, to preach without forming new societies, especially in the larger communities. It was hoped that the Methodists might be thus kept in closer sympathy with the Established Church, and that tendencies to secession might be prevented. It was a concession to the many devout men who approved the opinions and usefulness of Wesley and his fellow-labourers, but who recoiled at the prospect of a Methodist sect, which, by its separation from the National Church, could not fail to carry with it the sympathy of a large proportion of the common people, and might in the future shake the very foundations of the Establishment. This policy was now abandoned. It had been tried, and was found to be pernicious. The clergy generally continued their hostility to Methodism. They neglected, and in many cases maltreated, the thousands of converts which it sent to their communion altars, and proffered to their pastoral care. "We have preached," says the Minutes, "for more than a year, without forming societies, in a large tract of land from Newcastle to Berwick-on-Tweed, and almost all the seed has fallen upon the wayside; there is scarce any fruit of it remaining." Among the inconveniences arising from this course, it was affirmed that, first, the preacher could not give proper exhortations and instructions to those who were convinced of sin, unless he had opportunities

* As the Octavo Minutes contain no records of this session, we are indebted for them exclusively to the "Disciplinary Minutes." Smith's Hist., etc., book ii. chap. 3.

of meeting them apart from the mixed, unawakened multitude; second, they could not watch over one another in love unless thus united together; third, nor could the believers build up one another, or bear one another's burdens. Wesley still, however, clung to the Church, though it was difficult for him, with even such concessions, to prevent many of his people from resenting, by open dissent, its stately and obstinate disdain of their laborious lay preachers, as well as of the Methodistic clergy, who were unimpeachably orthodox, and the most useful ministers of the realm.*

The Conference adjourned, counselling "a closer union of the assistants with each other."

About eighteen months later, November 16, 1749, it assembled again in London.† A measure was now suggested which would have tended to consolidate the societies, and sever them, practically, still more from the Established Church. It was proposed that the society in London should be considered the mother church; that every assistant in country circuits should send reports to the stewards of the London circuit, who should arrange a regular correspondence with all the provincial societies. With this scheme was to be combined an annual collection throughout the land for the relief of necessitous societies. Wesley was at first greatly pleased with the plan. "Being thus united," he said, "in one body, of which Christ Jesus is head, neither the world

* At a later date, Wesley, in alluding to the arguments of Methodists who advocated open dissent, says: "I will freely acknowledge that I cannot answer these arguments to my own satisfaction. As yet we have not taken one step further than we were convinced was our bounden duty. It is from a full conviction of this that we have preached abroad, prayed *extempore*, formed societies, and permitted preachers who were not episcopally ordained. And were we pressed on this side, were there no alternative allowed, we should judge it our bounden duty rather wholly to separate from the Church than to give up any one of these points; therefore if we cannot stop a separation without stopping lay preachers, the case is clear, we cannot stop it at all." Letter to Rev. Mr. Walker, September 24, 1755. Arminian Magazine, 1779.

† The Octavo Minutes cannot be relied on for a distinct report of the proceedings of this session, for many of the proceedings attributed by that work to this year belong to other sessions. They are a compendium of the minutes from 1748 to 1763, placed together for convenience, but without discrimination. For the real minutes of 1749 we are indebted to a manuscript report appended to the recently-discovered "Disciplinary Minutes." (Smith's Hist. of Meth., ii., 3.) As the minutes were not usually printed, written copies alone were presented to new members of the Conference at their admission on probation. (Watson's Wesley, chap. 9.) This important manuscript is doubtless one of those copies.

nor the devil will be able to separate us in time or in eternity." Its possible tendency towards a separation from the Established Church was probably his reason for not effectively adopting it. He proposed, however, to try it by appointing one of his "helpers" on each circuit to take charge of its societies, giving him exclusively thereafter the title of "assistant," a term which had hitherto been applied, interchangeably with "helper," to all his lay preachers. Nine such were designated to the circuits, which still continued to be of that number. The proposed relation to the London circuit, was not, however, realized. The annual Conference became more appropriately the centre of unity to the societies.

A variety of minute regulations originated at this session. Quarterly meetings, which had been held in some places, were ordered to be everywhere observed. Watch-nights and love-feasts were to be held monthly. Every circuit was to be supplied with books by the assistant, and every society was to provide "a private room," and also books, for the helper. A return was to be made quarterly of money for books from each society, and thus began that organized system of book and tract distribution which has secured to Methodism a more extensive use of the religious press than can be found in any other Protestant denomination of our day. Wesley had already issued many publications, from the one-page tract to the stout volume. He forthwith began his "Christian Library," in fifty volumes, and all his preachers were soon active "colporteurs." Tracts especially did he publish, and scatter both by his own hands and by his preachers. "A Word to a Smuggler;" "A Word to a Swearer;" "A Word to a Street-walker;" "A Word to a Drunkard;" "A Word to a Malefactor;" "A Word to a Sabbath-breaker;"—such were the titles of small publications which he disseminated over the kingdom. "He thus," says his best biographer, "by his example, was probably the first to apply, on any large scale, this important means of usefulness to the reformation of the people."*

On the 8th of March, 1750, was held the seventh Conference. Only four months had passed since the preceding session; its proceedings seem not to have been important. Not a trace of its minutes is preserved; nor have we the minutes of any subsequent sessions, save two, before the year 1765, when their regular publication commenced.

A little more than ten years had passed since the recognized epoch of Methodism. The results thus far were certainly remark-

* Watson's Life of Wesley, chap. 8.

able. A scarcely paralleled religious interest had been spread and sustained throughout the United Kingdom and along the Atlantic coast of America. The churches of both countries had been extensively reawakened. The great fact of a lay ministry had been accomplished—great not only in its direct results, but perhaps more so by its reacting shock, in various respects, against the ecclesiasticism which for fifteen hundred years had fettered Christianity with bands of iron. It had presented before the world the greatest pulpit orator of the age, if not of any age; also one of the greatest religious legislators of history; a hymnist whose supremacy has been but doubtfully disputed by a single rival;* and the most signal example of female agency in religious affairs which Christian history records. The lowest abysses of the English population among colliers and miners had been reached by the gospel. Calvinistic Methodism was restoring the decayed nonconformity of England. Wesleyan Methodism, though adhering to the Establishment, had taken an organic and permanent form; it had its annual Conferences, quarterly Conferences, class meetings, and band meetings; its watch-nights and love-feasts; its travelling preachers, local preachers, exhorters, leaders, trustees, and stewards. It had districted England, Wales, and Ireland into circuits for systematic ministerial labours, and now commanded a ministerial force of about seventy men.† It had fought its way through incredible persecutions and riots, and had won at last a general, though not universal peace. Its chapels and preachers' houses, or parsonages, were multiplying over the country. It had a rich psalmody, which has since spread wherever the English tongue is used; and a well-defined theology,

* The American Presbyterian Quarterly for March, 1858, says: "We regard it as a great loss to the Presbyterian churches of our country that so few, comparatively, of Charles Wesley's hymns should have been admitted into their collections. It may not be generally known that, not even excepting Dr. Watts, he is the most voluminous of all our lyrical authors, and it were only justice to add, that he is the most equal. . . . We have never read or sung a finer specimen than his well-known paraphrase of the 24th Psalm: "Our Lord is risen from the dead," etc. There is another objective hymn by Charles Wesley which is among the finest in the language. We wonder that it has not found its way into American hymn-books: "Stand the omnipotent decree," etc. Well has this hymn been spoken of as being in a strain more than human. There is the noble hymn by Charles Wesley, Jacob wrestling with the Angel, concerning which Dr. Watts did not scruple to say that it was worth all the verses he himself had written. James Montgomery declares it to be among the poet's highest achievements. Never have we read a finer combination of poetic taste and evangelical sentiment.

† There are no data for an estimate of the membership of its societies.

which was without dogmatism, and distinguished by two notable facts, that could not fail to secure popular interest, namely, that it transcended the prevalent creeds in both *spirituality* and *liberality*—in its experimental doctrines of conversion, sanctification, and the witness of the Spirit, and in the evangelical liberalism of its Arminianism. It had begun its present scheme of popular religious literature, had provided the first of that series of academic institutions which has since extended with its progress, and was contemplating a plan of ministerial education, which has been effectively accomplished. Already the despondent declarations of Watts, Secker, and Butler, respecting the prospects of religion, might be pronounced no longer relevant. Yet Watts had been dead but two years, and Secker and Butler still survived.*

* Watts had lingered in his hospitable retirement at Abney Park, whence he beheld with grateful surprise the religious revolution which was spreading through the country. He received there occasional visits from Charles Wesley, Lady Huntingdon, and other leading Methodists. Doddridge still survived, welcoming Whitefield and the Wesleys at Northampton and corresponding with them. He revised Whitefield's journals, and, in his occasional visits to London, found religious consolation among the Methodists at Lady Huntingdon's mansion.

BOOK IV.

PROGRESS OF METHODISM FROM 1750 TO THE DEATH OF WHITEFIELD IN 1770.

CHAPTER I.

METHODISM IN IRELAND: 1750—1760.

Wesley again in Ireland—John Jane—Progress of Methodism—Remarkable German Colony—It gives Birth to American Methodism—Methodism in the Army in Ireland—Duncan Wright, a Soldier, becomes a Preacher—Sketch of his Life—A Military Execution induces him to preach—He joins the itinerancy—A converted Surgeon—Thomas Walsh—His Sickness—His saintly Character—His Dissent from Fletcher on the Death of Good Men—His own Mental Trouble in Death.

IMMEDIATELY after the Conference of 1750 Wesley again started for Ireland, passing through Wales, and preaching with much success on his route. He was accompanied by Christopher Hopper, a man of note among the early Methodist itinerants. Wesley summoned John Jane, a self-sacrificing evangelist, to meet him and Hopper at Holyhead before they embarked. Jane gave an example of the usual heroic obedience of the lay preachers to their great leader's commands: he made the journey on foot with but three shillings for his expenses. The devoted man could not fail, however, to secure the interest of humble families on the route; he was entertained six nights out of the seven by utter strangers, and arrived at Holyhead with one penny in his pocket. In a few months he sunk under excessive labours. The poverty of the Methodist itinerants seldom allowed them to use horses in those times, and John Jane usually travelled on foot; a long walk to a preaching place on a hot day produced a fever, under which he died with more than resignation—"with a smile on his face," said one of his fellow-labourers, leaving as his last utterance the words, "I find the love of God in Christ Jesus." Wesley concludes a notice of his death in his Journal with these remarkable words: "All his

clothes, linen and woollen, stockings, hat, and wig are not thought sufficient to answer his funeral expenses, which amount to £1 17*s.* 3*d.* All the money he had was 1*s.* 4*d.*, enough for an unmarried preacher of the gospel to leave to his executors."* St. Francis himself, adds Robert Southey, might have been satisfied with such a disciple.

Wesley spent nearly four months in Ireland during this visit, travelling and preaching in every direction. At Dublin he found the societies in a more prosperous state than ever. In Cork the riots had not yet entirely subsided; their contagion had also spread to other towns; and he was frequently assailed while preaching in the open air in that part of the island. In Limerick the foundations of Methodism had been securely laid; sixty Highlanders of the army had joined the classes, "and by their zeal, according to knowledge, had stirred up many." At Newmarket, the former residence of Thomas Walsh, he met a prosperous society, and was so deeply affected among them as to be compelled by his emotions to stop short several times in his address. At Athlone, he says, it was such a night as he had seldom known; the stout-hearted were broken down on every side. In Longford a storm of rain could not drive the people from the outdoor services; the Word cut like a two-edged sword; several persons fell as if smitten with death, and some were carried away insensible. Others, he writes, would have gone away but could not, for the hand of the Lord pressed them to the earth. Yet such were his views of the Irish character that he exclaimed, amid these scenes: "O fair beginning! But what will the end be?" Similar effects attended his labours at Drumcree, and, indeed, throughout this prolonged visit. As he passed daily from town to town, preaching morning, noon, and night, among Papists and Protestants, he was almost everywhere cheered with evidences of the triumph of the Gospel. The work of God advanced, he writes, in the county of Cork, and at Waterford and Limerick, as well as in Mount Mellick, Athlone, Longford, and most parts of the province of Leinster. He had the satisfaction of observing how greatly God had blessed his lay fellow-labourers, by whom multitudes were saved from the error of their ways. Many of these had been eminent for all manner of sins; many had been Roman Catholics; and he supposes the number of converts among the latter would have been far greater had not the Protestant, as well as the Popish priests, taken pains to hinder them.†

* Wesley's Journal, anno 1750.

† Short History of the People called Methodists.

The dead Protestantism of the land was his chief obstacle. "Oh, what a harvest might be in Ireland!" he writes, in the midst of these tireless labours, "did not the poor Protestants hate Christianity worse than either Popery or heathenism." Before leaving Dublin for England he was heard in the public green by larger congregations than he had ever addressed in the city.

In 1752 he was again in Ireland visiting most of the towns of his former route. He found equal reasons for encouragement. His preachers were now numerous enough in the country for him to hold an informal Conference among them. The mobs at Cork had ceased, and he projected a new chapel in that city. He repeated his visit in 1756, when all his assistants on the island met him at Dublin, and planned, with good courage, for still greater labours. Thomas Walsh accompanied him in his excursions among the towns, preaching in Irish with great effect. After visiting the societies in Leinster and Munster, they went into the province of Connaught, scattering the good seed broadcast. He visited also, for the first time, the province of Ulster, where he found that the labours of his preachers had been extensively useful. Churchmen, Dissenters, and reformed Papists constituted the societies, and there "was no striving among them except to enter in at the strait gate."

He had now traversed every part of Ireland except the county of Sligo, on the western coast. In 1758 he returned in order to visit particularly that region—the best peopled, he says, that he had seen in the kingdom. He preached in the market-place of the city several times to large congregations, and with great effect; and from that time, he adds, there have never been wanting a few in Sligo who worship God in spirit and in truth; and in many other parts of the county numerous converts had been gathered into classes.

He passed to Court Mattress, where he found a colony of Germans, whose fathers had come into the kingdom under Queen Anne, from the Palatinate on the Rhine. A hundred and ten families had settled in the town and in the adjacent hamlets of Killiheen, Ballygarrane, and Pallas, and their population was now numerous. Having no minister they became noted for drunkenness, profanity, and an utter contempt of religion; but they had changed remarkably since they had heard the truth from the Methodist itinerants; an oath was now rarely heard among them, nor a drunkard seen in their borders. They had built a large preaching-house in the middle of Court Mattress. Many times afterwards Wesley preached among them, as did also his fellow-

labourers, and with lasting effect. So did God at last provide, he remarks, for these poor strangers, who for fifty years had none that cared for their souls.

At a later visit, he says that three such towns as Killiheen, Ballygarrane, and Court Mattress could hardly be found elsewhere in Ireland or England; there was no profanity, no Sabbath-breaking, no ale-house in any of them. "How," he exclaims, "will these poor foreigners rise up in the day of judgment against those that are around about them!"*

But the most extraordinary fact respecting this German colony thus found out and evangelized by the Methodist itinerants, was not yet apprehended by Wesley. It was destined to give birth to Methodism in the New World. During his visit to the island in 1752, he became acquainted with one of these German Irishmen, who was afterwards licensed as a local preacher among them. Fourteen years later this young man resided with a small company of his countrymen in the city of New York. Strangers in a strange land, and deprived of the religious aids which Methodism had afforded them among their distant brethren, they had lost their religious zeal and strictness, and some of them were playing at cards, when a devout woman, a later emigrant from Ballygarrane, reproved them, and going to the local preacher, entreated him to resume his Methodist labours. He was recalled to his duty by the seasonable appeal. He opened his own house, a humble one-story building, for worship, preached there, and formed there the first Methodist society in America. In two years more he dedicated the first American Methodist chapel, and thus founded that form of Methodism which was destined to become, within the lifetime of many then born, the predominant Protestant belief of the New World, from Newfoundland to California.†

On one of his visits to Ireland Wesley said that "the first call" of Methodism there was to the soldiers.‡ They defended him and his people amid the mob at Cork, where they flocked to his preaching, and where the rioters, when they saw them in the assembly, lowered their shillalahs or retreated. Ordinary Methodists suffered persecution quietly; but these stout-hearted men

* Journal, anno 1760.

† Wesley's Journal, 1758, 1760, 1762. Bangs's History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, vol. i. chap. 2. Wakeley's Lost Chapters Recovered from the Early History of American Methodism, chaps. 2, 3, 13. See also two letters by Rev. C. P. Harrower, in the Christian Advocate and Journal (New York), May 13 and 20, 1858.

‡ Journal, anno 1756.

felt that their Methodism ought not to deprive them entirely of the use of their professional license, and were quite ready to stop praying at times in order to fight a little for what they deemed the honour of religion. They gathered around Wesley at Dublin, where he often preached near their barracks for safety from the rabble. They liked him heartily, with the rough generosity of soldiers, as not only a good but a brave man. They made a way for him with their swords into an immense crowd in the public green of that city, and preserved order while he preached. There was a class in that city composed of nineteen of them who "were resolved," he says, "to fight the good fight of faith." At Phillipston they constituted the strength of his society. At Limerick he formed, as we have seen, a class of sixty. At Kilkenny they took him into the barracks, and had him to preach to them, and "a few of both the army and the town met together" as a society. In another place the remnants of John Nelson's regiment gathered to hear him. At Kinsale they rallied around him, and many of them, he writes, "were good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

The army in Ireland afforded to Methodism, during our present period, one of its most useful early preachers. Duncan Wright, a brave Scotchman, had early a "bookish inclination," and in his childhood "read and wept often till his head ached," wishing to be a Christian, "and to be easy and happy, but not knowing how." He resolved to dissipate his anxieties by seeing the world in a military life, and enlisted in his eighteenth year in a regiment of foot. The next year he was in camp near Cashel, Ireland, but found no escape there from his religious impressions, for a good corporal preached frequently to the troops. Methodist fellow-soldiers disturbed his conscience when the regiment removed to Limerick. He attended the Methodist society in that city, and at last sought the conversation of its members with eagerness, as the best guidance to his disturbed mind. He used to spend his wakeful hours at night in weeping and prayer, and it was on one of these "weeping nights," he says, "that the Lord brought him in an instant out of darkness into His marvellous light."*

During the ensuing two years he passed through many vicissitudes, inward and outward, and was deeply impressed with the thought that he should openly proclaim the truth to his comrades. He resisted the impression, however, until a melancholy event called him to his duty. The government, he says, had resolved

* Arminian Magazine, 1781, page 368.

to shoot a deserter in every city of Ireland as an example. A youth but twenty years old, in Wright's regiment, was among the condemned. The earnest Scotchman hastened with trembling to converse and pray with him, though he was surrounded by guards. He found the unfortunate young man "weeping as if his heart would break, and reading 'The Whole Duty of Man' with all his might, like a drowning man catching at anything to save himself." Wright spoke a few words of exhortation to him, and returned to him in the evening, though with reluctance, as there were many soldiers gazing upon them. He prayed with him, and exhorted all who were present. The doomed youth saw himself an undone sinner, without help, and almost without hope. Taking with him some of his comrades, Wright visited him twice or thrice a-day, and four days before his execution, he received the peace of God. From that time he witnessed a good confession to all who approached him. Every one that saw him go to the place where he was shot, could not but admire the serene joy that appeared in his countenance. He said but little; but his calm, happy death made a deep impression on many of the soldiers, for they could not fail to discern the difference between him and one they saw die shortly before at Dublin, who showed the greatest reluctance, the field-officer of the day being obliged to ride up to him several times to tell him he *must* die, while this converted victim was not above ten minutes on his knees before "he dropped the signal and went to paradise."

The execution of this young man induced Wright to preach, and at last to enter the itinerant ministry. Every night, after the call of the roll, he held a meeting at his quarters for his fellow-soldiers, and soon formed a Methodist class among them. He at first only sang, prayed, and read with them; but his light usually went out early, and he was compelled to lay aside his book and exhort. He thus became known as the camp preacher. As his regiment moved from town to town he had opportunities of spreading the truth. He was, in fine, already an itinerant Evangelist. He planted Methodism in Galway; no Methodist preacher had ever been there before him, yet he had many seals to his ministry in that city, and years later he wrote: "Some of them are a comfort to me to this day, and some are fallen asleep in Jesus." He did good service also in Dublin while there with his regiment.

His colonel endeavoured to stop his preaching, but could not, and was at last glad to get him out of the army; and, "thus it was," he says, "that the Lord thrust me into the harvest." He

assisted at a great revival in Waterford, and proved himself a workman that needed not to be ashamed, so that Wesley soon sent him out as a travelling preacher.

His loss to the army was, however, in an unexpected manner supplied for a time. The surgeon of a regiment, who was the favourite wit of his comrades, went to hear a local preacher in order to procure new matter of merriment; but while leaning on his cane, and looking waggishly at the speaker through his fingers, the humble man's word pierced his heart like an arrow. He became a zealous Methodist, and preached to the soldiers wherever he could find opportunity, till on visiting some sick prisoners in the Dublin Newgate he contracted a malignant fever, and "finished his course rejoicing in God his Saviour."

Duncan Wright proved himself a good soldier of the Lord Jesus. He travelled extensively in Ireland, sometimes accompanying Wesley, though he had to acknowledge that, notwithstanding his own military training, Wesley's activity gave him "too much exercise," and he "had to give it up." Besides his useful labours in Ireland, he preached in Scotland, and occupied important circuits in England, and, after thirty years' service, fell at his post.

While Methodism was thus advancing in Ireland, it was destined to suffer towards the close of the present period an irreparable loss. Wesley was in Limerick in the spring of 1758; he met there Thomas Walsh, "just alive." "Three of the best physicians in these parts," he writes, "have attended him, and all agree that it is a lost case. Oh what a man to be snatched away in the strength of his years! Surely Thy judgments are a great deep!" Thomas Walsh died a martyr, but he was self-martyred. His constitution was originally feeble, yet he used it in his mental and ministerial labours as if it were Herculean; he preached constantly twice, and often thrice a-day, besides visiting his people from house to house, especially the sick and the dying, from some of whom it was said he was rarely a day absent while he was stationed in London. Meanwhile his studies were pursued as if they were alone the occupation of his time. He rose at four in the morning, and pored over his books late into the night; and preaching and pastoral work, assiduously as they were pursued, seemed but slight intermissions of the work of the brain. When advised to take more sleep, he replied, "Should a man rob God?" apparently not aware that his extreme self-denial was the most effectual robbery of God by the abbreviation of his usefulness in life. He walked the streets of great cities absorbed in introspection and

prayer, and as unobservant of external things as if he were in the solitude of a wilderness. He spent much time reading the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures upon his knees. He seldom smiled, and perhaps never laughed after the commencement of his public ministry. This habitual self-absorption, added to excessive labour, produced the usual consequences of such errors; his health failed, and his nervous sensibilities suffered tortures which he too often ascribed to demoniacal agency.

In some of his inward combats he would rise at night, and, prostrating himself with his face upon the floor, would pray and weep before God with unutterable agony. He needed rest and relaxation, and the innocent refreshments of social life. Wesley, who, if not one of the wisest, was one of the most sagacious of men, knew what was requisite in a case like that of Walsh; he took prudent care of his own health, and wrote the best sanitary rules for his preachers; but when we remember that Walsh was frequently with him in Ireland, and laboured at three different periods in London, the last time for nearly two years, residing there in Wesley's own house, we are surprised, we are more than surprised, that he did not interpose his authority, if his advice were unavailing, to rescue this young and splendid victim. Wesley seemed to regard him with a sentiment which could hardly be called respect; it was reverence, if not awe. Of no other one of his contemporaries, young or old, has he left such emphatic expressions of admiration as for this young man—a youth of hardly twenty years when he began his ministry, and but twenty-eight when he descended into the grave.* All contemporary allusions to him, found in Methodist books, express similar reverence, if not indeed wonder. Not merely his great learning, nor his talents in the pulpit, where he often seemed clothed with the ardour and majesty of a seraph, but something in his character, something of saintly dignity and moral grandeur, impressed thus his friends and those most who were most intimate with him.† His Roman Catholic education and reading seemed to have given to his piety an ascetic tinge, which the confiding and joyous trustfulness of his Methodistic faith could not entirely correct. He fasted and denied himself excessively. At twenty-five he looked like a man

* In a letter to his brother Charles he says of Walsh:—"I love, admire, and honour him, and wish we had six preachers in all England of his spirit."

† "He was a person of a surprising greatness of soul, for which the whole circumference of created good was far, far too little." Morgan's Life of Walsh, chap. 15.

of forty.* He persisted in preaching when "one would have thought he must drop down dead immediately after." His friends represent him as seeming not to belong to this world; nor could a person better conceive of him, they say, than by forming an idea of one who had returned from the happy dead to converse with men. "Thou knowest my desire," he wrote—"thou knowest there has never been a saint upon earth whom I do not desire to resemble, in doing and suffering thy whole will. I would walk with thee, my God, as Enoch did. I would follow thee to a land unknown, as Abraham did. I would renounce all for thee, as did Moses and Paul. I would, as did Stephen, seal thy truth with my blood!" One who from study of the Scriptures understood what manner of person a Christian approved of God must be, and who, from his religious solicitude, read, conversed, and thought of little else, says, that in Thomas Walsh he saw clearly what till then he had only conceived; that in him his conceptions were truly exemplified. Prostrate upon his face, kneeling, standing, walking, eating—in every posture, and in every place and condition, he was a man mighty in prayer. "In sleep itself, to my certain knowledge," says one of his associates, "his soul went out (Cant. v. 2) in groans, and sighs, and tears to God. His heart having attained such a habit of tendency to its Lord, could only give over when it ceased to beat." He is represented as sometimes lost in mental absence on his knees, with his face heavenward and arms clasped upon his breast, in such composure that scarcely could one hear him so much as breathe; as absorbed in God, and enjoying a calmness and transport which could not be expressed; while from the serenity, and something resembling splendour which appeared on his countenance, and in all his gestures afterward, one might easily discover that he had been on the Mount of Communion, and had descended, like Moses, with the divine glory on his brow.

His public prayers were attended with such ardour, pertinence, and faith, that it appeared, says his biographer, "as though the heavens were burst open, and God himself appeared in the congregation."

He was sometimes rapt away, as from earth, in his devotions, being quite lost to himself, and insensible of everything around him, absorbed in the visions of God; and in these profound and

* With the exception of his larger and more luminous eye, his portraits might be taken as fac-similes of the current pictures of Jonathan Edwards, whom he resembled much in other respects.

solemn frames of mind he has remained for hours, still and motionless as a statue.

It has already been remarked that the death of this saintly, this seraphic man, was attended by circumstances deeply afflictive to his friends, and affording a suggestive lesson.* Bunyan shows his sagacity in representing his hero as beset with terrors and demonaical mockeries before his final triumph, for the characters of neither good nor bad men can be inferred from their dying words. It pleases God usually to comfort exceedingly his children in the solemn crisis of death; and even the phantasies of the struggling and disordered mind generally then take their character from the habitually pious or godless course of the preceding life; but it is sometimes otherwise; disease and drugs have much effect on the shattered sensibilities, and Christian biography teaches that surviving friends should attach but little significance, whether saddening or consoling, to the last expressions of the dead. Life, not death, reveals the probable fate of the soul.

Thomas Walsh once heard Fletcher, of Madeley, preach in Wesley's Chapel, in London, on the dying trials of good men. Fletcher supposed that some comparatively weak believers might die most cheerfully; and that some strong ones, for the further purification of their faith, or for inscrutable reasons, might have severe conflicts. At the subsequent meeting of the Bands, Walsh opposed this opinion, and said he thought it bore hard against God's justice, faithfulness, and covenant love to his servants. Fletcher modestly observed that God's wisdom is sovereign and unsearchable; and though he was sorry he had given offence, yet he could not, with a good conscience, retract what he had said. With some degree of warmth Walsh replied: "Be it done unto you according to your faith; and be it done unto me according to mine!" and here the matter rested.†

Two years afterwards Walsh needed in death the consolatory opinion of Fletcher. During some months he struggled with what were doubtless the agonies of a disordered nervous system. He was brought almost to the extremity of mental anguish, if not despair of his salvation. To his Christian brethren it was a mysterious spectacle, and public prayers were offered up for him in Dublin, London, and other places. "His great soul," says his biographer, "lay thus, as it were, in ruins for some considerable time, and poured out many a heavy groan and speechless tear from an oppressed heart and dying body. He sadly bewailed the

* See page 256. † Rev. Melville Horne: Appendix to Walsh's Life.

absence of Him whose wonted presence had so often given him the victory over the manifold contradictions and troubles which he endured for his name's sake."

But as sometimes the clouds, thick on the whole heavens, are rent at the horizon the moment the sun seems to pause there before setting, and his last rays stream in and flood with effulgence and joy the entire sky, so was the darkness lifted from the last hour of this good man. After prayers had been offered in his chamber by a group of sympathizing friends, he requested to be left alone a few minutes that he might "meditate a little." They withdrew, and he remained in profound prayer and self-recollection for some time. At last he broke out with the rapturous exclamation, "*He is come!—he is come!—my beloved is mine, and I am his;—his for ever!*" and died.

Thus lived and thus, in his early manhood, died Thomas Walsh, a man whose memory is still as ointment poured forth in the sanctuaries of Methodism.*

Before the Conference of 1760, Wesley again passed rapidly over much of Ireland. He found the societies in Dublin larger than they had ever been. Connaught enrolled more than three hundred members; Ulster about two hundred and fifty; Leinster a thousand; Munster about six hundred. Methodism, he remarks, had now successfully made its way into every county in Ireland, save Kerry, and many were its exemplary witnesses in most large towns, as well as in the rural districts. He doubted not, however, that there would have been double the number had it not been for the hostility of Protestants, who, with an infatuation which blinded them against their own interest, had endeavoured to defeat the Methodistic movement in almost every important place of the kingdom.†

* The last mental sufferings of Walsh "spread a very strong sensation among his brethren," says Horne. Fletcher, whose wise remarks in London he had so hastily challenged, was deeply affected by his friend's sad verification of them. He wrote a heart-touching letter to Charles Wesley on the occasion, and expressed himself as despondent in view of his own death after such a fact; yet no more triumphant death is recorded in Christian biography than that which awaited the pious vicar of Madeley. See Melville Horne's remarks, Appendix to Walsh's Life. Horne's irrelevant supposition as to the cause of Walsh's despondence is sufficiently refuted by Jackson: Life of Charles Wesley, chap. 21.

† See his "Short History of the People called Methodists."

CHAPTER II.

ARMINIAN METHODISM IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND: 1750—1760.

Success in Cornwall—Wesley in Scotland—His slight Success—He itinerates in England—State of the Societies—Proselytism of the Baptists—Nathaniel Gilbert and Methodism in the West Indies—First African Methodist—Happy Deaths of Methodists—James Wheatley the first expelled Methodist Preacher—John Bennett's Secession—Grace Murray—Wesley's fraternal Disposition towards Calvinists—Whitefield—Wesley preaches and administers the Sacrament to the Calvinistic Leaders at Lady Huntingdon's house—Sketches of Thomas Lee and Christopher Hopper—Charles Wesley ceases to itinerate—Death of Meriton—Fletcher of Madeley—Wesley's desire for Rest and Solitude—His unfortunate Marriage—His serious Sickness—His Epitaph—His Notes on the New Testament—James Hervey—Wesley's Address to the Clergy—His Views of Ministerial Qualifications.

At the beginning of the present period of our narrative, Wesley wrote to one of his preachers that from Newcastle to London, and from London to Bristol, God was everywhere reviving his work.* He visited Cornwall repeatedly during this time.† At St. Just he still found the largest of his societies in the west; so great a proportion of believers he had not seen in any other part of the nation, nor "any society so alive to God." He laid there the foundation of a new chapel, and when it was completed pronounced it the best in the country. Preaching-houses had begun to dot the west generally, but they were as yet very humble structures, and scarcely distinguishable as chapels.

He assembled at St. Ives the stewards of all the Cornish societies in a quarterly meeting, and held with them the first Watch-night known in that region. Only slight and occasional attempts were now made at persecution, for Methodism had triumphed generally in this once degraded section of the land. "What now," wrote Wesley, "can destroy the work of God in these parts but zeal for and contending about opinions." He had as great an antipathy against doctrinal controversies as most theologians have zeal for them. Crowds of tinners attended him

* Letter to Joseph Cownley. Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, vol. i. page 100.

† Journal, 1750, 1753, 1757.

wherever he appeared. Gwennap assembled still its immense hosts. At Camelford he preached in the market-place, and had occasion to exclaim, "How are the lions in this town become lambs!" Port Isaac, long a barren soil, promised now to bring forth abundant fruit. At St. Agnes the knowledge of God had already "travelled from the lowest to the greatest." He was surprised at the talents of the Cornish local preachers; he heard extempore preaching from a reformed tinner as correct as "most men of learning could write." Some of the old persecutors in high life had become changed; and the one who imprisoned Maxfield no longer molested the Methodists nor allowed others to oppose them, but had become noted by his charities to the poor. At one place he found, in his usual pastoral examination of the society, that some of its members were in the practice of using, if not of dealing in "uncustomed goods," then a general vice on the Cornish coast. He stopped short in his inquiries, and told them they should see his face no more unless the accursed thing were entirely abandoned; and Methodism, more than any other means, has corrected the evil throughout Cornwall.* At St. Mewen and St. Austle his congregations were too large to be accommodated. At St. Ewe some fell to the earth under the preached Word, and the whole assembly seemed awe-struck. At Redruth he addressed in the open street a crowd who wept around him. At Falmouth he found that the former riots were followed by reverent attention; the town was "quiet from one end to the other;" not only his chapel, but the yard and the neighbouring houses were crowded with eager hearers. At Breage a great reformation had taken place; it had been noted for its violence against the Methodists; its clergyman instigated mobs, and fabricated the basest slanders respecting Wesley and his societies, charging him with having been expelled from Oxford for a crime, and his people with extinguishing the lights in their private meetings like the ancient heathen. After bringing upon the inoffensive society much suffering by these reports, the clerical persecutor had sunk into despondence and hanged himself. The people now flocked around Wesley; he had not intended to stop among them, but they constrained him. He preached in the street, and gratefully recorded that "the lions of Breage too were now changed into lambs." Everywhere, in fine, on the west coast did he find the power of the truth prevailing.

In April, 1751, he first visited Scotland, accompanied by Christopher Hopper, who had returned with him from Ireland.

* It reformed also the barbarous cruelties of the wreckers on that coast.

It has already been stated* that Methodist dragoons from the regiment of John Haime, in Flanders, had founded societies at Dunbar and Musselborough. A colonel, now in quarters at the latter place, invited Wesley to the North. Whitefield warned him not to go, as his Arminian principles would "leave him nothing to do but to dispute from morning till night."† Wesley replied that he would go; that he would studiously avoid controverted points, and, according to his custom, keep to the fundamental truths of Christianity. He went, and was welcomed to Musselborough. He preached while the people stood as statues around him, respectful, but too cold for his Methodistic ardour; nevertheless, the prejudice which, as he says, the devil had been several years planting, was plucked up in an hour. A bailiff of the town and an elder of the kirk waited upon him, with the request that he should stay with them for some time, or at least two or three days longer, and offered to fit up a larger place for his congregations. His engagements, however, called him away; but Hopper returned, and preached among them to large congregations. This, says the lay itinerant, was the beginning of a good work in Scotland.‡ Still later, Hopper preached at Edinburgh, Dunbar, Leith, Dundee, and Aberdeen. God, he wrote, blessed his word, "and raised up witnesses that He had sent us to the North Britons also."

In April, 1753, Wesley again entered Scotland. He was received courteously by Gillies of Glasgow. He preached early in the morning outside the town; the weather and the hour did not suit the Scotch, and his congregation was small; but at the service under a tent in the afternoon he had "six times as many," and his word was "in power." It rained the next day, and Gillies had the courage to open the kirk for him. A few years earlier, it would have required equal courage on the part of Wesley to enter it, such had been his "High-Church principles." "Surely," he said at the close of the day, "with God nothing is impossible! Who would have believed, five and twenty years ago, either that the minister would have desired it, or that I should have consented to preach in a Scotch kirk!" His next congregation was too large for the church, and he addressed them in the open air. On the Sabbath more than a thousand people listened to him in a shower of rain, and at his last sermon, the meadow in which he preached was filled from side to side. He believed that a great and effectual door was opened for Methodism in the North, but

* See page 179. † Coke and Moore's Life of Wesley, iii. 2.
‡ Hopper's Life. Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, vol. i. page 30.

the apparent respectfulness of the Scotch was mostly indifference. Their cold courtesy denied to Methodism even the stimulus of riots. They did not persecute him, but they would not follow him. On another occasion he remarked, that they *know* everything, and *feel* nothing. It became, indeed, a problem to him, "why the hand of the Lord, who does nothing without a cause, was almost entirely stayed in Scotland?"

He persisted, however, in his visits to the North. In 1757 he was again welcomed by Gillies to Glasgow, and the kirk could not accommodate his numerous but impassive congregations. A tent-pulpit was placed for him in the large and commodious yard of the poor-house, where a singular spectacle was presented. Around him stood the collected people; in front was the infirmary, with its windows crowded with the sick, while adjacent to it was the lunatic hospital, with its inmates reverently listening. Amid these scenes, he not only proclaimed his message, but what, perhaps, had never been done before by a Methodist preacher in Scotland, baptized several children. His congregations grew daily, notwithstanding the comparatively slight effect of his word. At one time, his voice could hardly reach their outmost limit; at another, two thousand people retired, unable to hear, though the evening was calm and clear. He discovered a small, obscure society in the city, but, with the characteristic national taste, they met mostly to discuss some general or difficult point of religion. He directed them to confine their attention to matters of personal piety, after the example of the Methodists in England, and placed them under the care of Dr. Gillies. He was agreeably surprised to find the society founded by John Haime's fellow-dragoons at Musselborough, zealous for the faith; "and there," he adds, "the tree was known by its fruits; the national shyness and stubbornness were gone, and they were as open and teachable as little children." At Dunbar he met equal encouragement—"a little society, most of them rejoicing in God their Saviour." The men whose piety had been tried in the fires of Fontenoy had introduced into both these places the living faith.

Wesley traversed England during the present period in every direction, and found the societies almost everywhere advancing. His preachers were still occasionally mobbed, but he himself was generally, if not universally, received with a respect which was fast growing into a national sentiment of reverence. At Birmingham, the chapel could not contain half his congregation, and he had to go into the street. "How has the scene changed here!" he writes; "the last time I preached at Birmingham, the stones

flew on every side; if any disturbance were made now, the disturber would be in more danger than the preacher." In meeting the society there, he says, the hearts of many were melted within them, so that neither they nor he could refrain from tears. At Wednesbury and Darlaston, formerly the strongholds of the Staffordshire mobs, God had summoned away, by "a train of amazing strokes, most of the old persecutors, and those that remained were not only respectful, but cordial." He preached to a large congregation in the open air at the former place, amid a rainstorm, but every man, woman, and child stayed till the end of the discourse. Peace, however, had brought greater perils than persecution. It was necessary for him to sift out Antinomian and Anabaptist errors, which had been brought in among them from abroad. At a later visit to Wednesbury, he found a new chapel erected, and remarked that few congregations exceeded this either in numbers or seriousness. At Wakefield, where, a few years before, the people were "as roaring lions," and the honest vicar would not allow him to preach in his yard, lest the mob should pull down the house, he was now heard attentively in the church. At Hull he met a very different reception, for it was his first appearance there. As he landed on the quay, it was crowded with staring and laughing groups, inquiring "Which is he? Which is he?" An immense multitude, rich and poor, horse and foot, with many coaches, gathered to hear him in the fields, half a mile out of the city. He cried to them, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Some thousands heard seriously, but "many behaved as if possessed by Moloch." Stones and clods flew on every side. When he had finished, the mob followed him, throwing missiles into his coach windows. The house in which he was entertained was attached until midnight, and its windows broken to the third story. Hull, however, speedily redeemed itself, and has ever since maintained the honour of Methodism. At his next visit, he was respectfully heard by its best citizens; and even the rich, he says, had the Gospel preached unto them in the streets. At Sunderland he found John Nelson's society to be "one of the liveliest in the North of England." It included two hundred and fifty members. At Biddick, a multitude of colliers stood to hear him in a drenching rain-storm, and melted like wax under the word. At Barnard Castle he held his ground, and preached through his discourse, though the mob played an engine upon the assembly. At Chester he saw the Methodist chapel in ruins; two days before his arrival the mob had pulled it down; but he

took his stand near the wreck, and defended "the sect everywhere spoken against." The mob was subdued, and Methodism again reared its standard there, never to be struck. At his next visit the scene was quite changed; "there was peace through all the city." At Bolton the society had doubled since his preceding visit; they were increased in grace as well as in numbers, "walking closely with God, lovingly and circumspectly with one another, and wisely towards those who were without." At Charlton he addressed a vast congregation, gathered from all the towns and country for many miles around. Methodism had recently made its way into the neighbourhood against the most discouraging odds. All the farmers had entered into a joint engagement to dismiss from their service any one who should dare to hear the itinerant preachers; but, providentially, the chief man of the combination was soon after smitten by the truth, and sent for these very men to preach in his house. Many of the other confederates came to hear, and their servants and labourers gladly followed their example; "so the whole device of Satan fell to the ground, and the Word of God grew and prevailed." At Manchester, Methodism still had severe struggles; the mob stood quiet and awe-struck while he preached in the street, but when he closed "raged horribly." He made his first visit to Liverpool (April, 1755), though he had now been itinerating over the realm for more than fifteen years; but that great commercial metropolis was yet in its infancy. He found there a Methodist chapel larger than that at Newcastle, and the hearts of the whole congregation "seemed to be moved before the Lord and the presence of His power." He spent nearly a week among them, preaching to crowds morning and evening.*

At Keighley, famous for riots, he preached without molestation; "such a change," he writes, "has God wrought in the hearts of the people since John Nelson was in the dungeon here." At York, which formerly repelled Methodism at every point, he now

* His remarks on the growth and prospects of Liverpool are a curiosity in our day. He says: "Liverpool is one of the neatest, best-built towns I have seen in England. I think it is full twice as large as Chester; most of the streets are quite straight. Two-thirds of the town, we were informed, has been added within these forty years. *If it continue to increase in the same proportion, in fifty years more it will nearly equal Bristol.* The people in general are the most mild and courteous I ever saw in a seaport town; as, indeed, appears by their friendly behaviour, not only to the Jews and Papists who live among them, but even to the Methodists (so-called). Many of them, I learned, were dear lovers of controversy; but I had better work. I pressed upon them all 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.'"

found the "richest society, number for number," which it possessed in England. At Sheffield, which had been unvisited by a Methodist itinerant since he himself had been there two years before, the little society had not only sustained itself, but had made progress in numbers and grace by its own efforts, under the guidance of its class-leaders. As he passed and repassed Haworth, he frequently paused to preach for Grimshaw. He usually administered the Lord's Supper there to a thousand communicants, and preached in the churchyard to many thousands of hearers, gathered from all the adjacent towns and villages. At Placey Methodism had demonstrated its efficacy, as at Kingswood, and a society of redeemed colliers welcomed him. It was a "pattern to all the societies in England;" no member ever missed his band or class; they had no discord of any kind among them, but with one heart and one mind provoked each other to love and good works. At Hornby he found that the landlords had turned all the Methodists out of their houses; but it proved "a singular kindness," for they built small houses at the end of the town, in which forty or fifty of them lived together, a little Christian community, as comfortable and devoted as a station of Moravians. At Wandsworth, "a desolate place," an effectual door was opened for him by a West India planter, several of whose negroes were present and awakened by the Word. He baptized two of them, one a convert, and the first regenerated African he had ever known. She returned to the West Indies with her master, and was the first of that innumerable host of her people which Methodism has ever since been leading into heaven from Africa and America. "Shall not His saving health be made known to all nations?" wrote Wesley, after preaching to them. The words were more prophetic than he supposed. This American gentleman was Nathaniel Gilbert, Speaker of the House of Assembly in Antigua. He became a local preacher, as we shall have occasion to notice, and introduced Methodism into the West Indies, where it has since spread among all the English colonies.

Such are but a few glimpses of Wesley's incessant travels and labours during this period. It would be impossible to follow him in their detail and in their results, without filling volumes. One interesting fact enhanced the encouragement of this general prosperity; Methodism had now been sufficiently long in progress to afford many ripe sheaves for heaven. It had been signalized by remarkable conversions; it had now become noted by triumphant deaths. "Our people die well," has always been a grateful remark of Methodists. As they were expected to maintain a good

"assurance" of the Divine favour in life, it was hardly possible they should falter on entering into the eternal life. By the year 1751 good John Nelson had a catalogue of more than seventy who had ascended to their rest in triumph from his prosperous society at Birstal.* In Bristol, London, and Dublin, the societies now frequently recorded, with mournful joy, the departure of their brethren beloved into the "general assembly, and church of the first-born which are written in heaven." The journals of both the Wesleys abound in such notices. Charles Wesley especially took a melancholy pleasure in recording them, and in no place more than among the reclaimed colliers of Kingswood, as yet the most interesting field of the triumphs of Methodism over the barbarism of the British populace. Many of his elegies, written on such occasions, have an unearthly power; a sadness of the grave pervaded by the rapture of heaven. On the death of nearly every Methodist preacher, from Thomas Beard, the martyr, who was the first that died, till, with an elegiac verse on his lips, he lay down himself to die, he wrote not one only, but usually two or three of these affecting and beautiful memorials. His "Funeral Hymns," occasioned, with hardly an exception, by actual deaths, constitute the most perfect part of the Methodist psalmody, and for a hundred years and more these testimonials of the dying triumphs of their early brethren have been sung at the death-beds and funerals of Methodists throughout the world.

These encouraging evidences of prosperity in most of the land were contrasted, however, by frequent instances of discord and delusion. At Bristol, serious disturbances occurred, and its nine hundred Methodists were diminished in 1757 to but half the number; but a day of fasting and prayer was observed, an extraordinary revival ensued, and the strength of the society was restored. The society at Norwich was rent and almost destroyed in 1751, by the defection and apostasy of James Wheatley, who fell into scandalous vices, and has the peculiar distinction of being the first Methodist preacher expelled from the Connection. The secession broke to pieces; Wesley gathered its remnants together, incorporated them into his remaining societies, and left the latter nearly six hundred strong.† In Lancashire the classes were disturbed by the secession of John Bennett and a large part of the Methodists at Bolton. Bennett was a man of classical education

* Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 17.

† Short History of the People called Methodists. My other data are from his Journal, from 1750 to 1760.

and superior native talents. He had been led into the Methodist ministry by Lady Huntingdon. His correspondence with Wesley shows him to have been opposed to Calvinism, but at his defection he assailed the Methodists violently for their Arminianism, and imputed Papistical doctrines to Wesley. He had been a useful man in Lancashire, Derbyshire, and Cheshire, but his new course was proportionally disastrous.*

In many of the country towns Wesley's most onerous work was the administration of discipline, especially along the coasts, where the crime of smuggling was hardly recognized by the common people as a vice. He showed it no forbearance. He nearly broke up whole classes in order to suppress the evil, and his societies did more than all the police of the realm to abate it.

He was also compelled to labour indefatigably to reclaim his incipient churches from doctrinal wranglings.† These he would not tolerate; Methodism disowned their importance; it would not admit that dogmas, except the most fundamental and generally received, should be considered conditions of Christian communion, or of membership in its classes. Calvinistic Antinomianism beset him at almost every turn, and ravaged his most promising societies. With the evangelical Calvinists of his day he maintained, however, the most harmonious relations. He ministered often during the present period in Whitefield's chapels,

* He was the husband of Grace Murray, to whom Wesley had made overtures of marriage. He died in about eight years after his separation from the Methodists. His excellent wife lived for more than fifty years, in Christian retirement, near Chapel-en-le-Frith, honouring religion by her daily example. She remained partial to the Methodist usages to the last, and maintained a class-meeting in her house for many years. She died in 1803, aged 89. Her last words were, "Glory to thee, my God; peace thou givest me." Wesley undoubtedly loved her, and she deserved his affection and his name. See Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. i., p. 45.

† The catholic reader will, perhaps, be surprised to learn that Wesley's chief vexation in this respect was from evangelical parties. He frequently refers to them as inveigling away his converts, or "making havoc" of his societies; and on one occasion (Journal, April 3, 1751) laments that he had to "spend near ten minutes in controversy with them," more than he had "done in public for many months, perhaps years before." Charles Wesley seldom alludes to these proselytisers without a tinge of bitterness. They seem to have vexed his righteous soul more than any other class of Christians, except those lay Methodist preachers who favoured Dissent. He calls them "cavilling, contentious, always watching to steal away our children." (Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 20.) Methodism has largely recruited its sister evangelical churches for a hundred years, but has characteristically avoided proselytism, though it has not deemed it right to repel applicants for membership from other denominations.

and Whitefield in his. After preaching in Whitefield's Tabernacle in Plymouth, he said: "Thus it behoveth us to trample on bigotry and party zeal. Ought not all who love God to love one another?" "Mr. Whitefield," he wrote, during a visit to London, "called upon me; disputings are now no more; we love one another, and join hand in hand to promote the cause of our common Master."* He met Whitefield, and the Calvinistic leaders on all convenient occasions, and at one time preached and administered the Lord's supper, at Lady Huntingdon's house in London, to Whitefield, Madan, Romaine, Downing, Venn, Griffith Jones, and others.† Tenacious as these good men were of what they called the "Doctrines of Grace" they could not well quarrel while they saw that the great "Work of Grace" was so triumphantly advancing through the country by the labours of both parties.

Though Wesley's reputation and years now commanded too much public respect to allow of frequent disturbances from mobs, his lay preachers had still often to encounter them, especially in towns and villages where they preached for the first time. Among the bravest of the brave of these heroic men was Thomas Lee. Few of his fellow-labourers endured severer "fights of affliction." From his childhood he had feared God, and maintained an admirable purity of conduct. He uttered an oath when but four years old, but felt such compunction for it that he never swore again throughout his life. As early as his tenth or eleventh year he experienced deep religious impressions, and the words "everlasting" and "eternal" were much upon his mind. In his fifteenth year, while an apprentice to the "worsted trade," he gave himself with fondness to books, and spent much of his leisure in reading the Scriptures. He also found delight in prayer, and had many inward consolations, though he had never then heard any one speak of the comforts of the Holy Ghost. He was, in fine, one of those earnest, sensitive minds, numerous in all communities, present in nearly all congregations, who are ready to respond to the first faithful appeals of the pulpit, and who sprang forth everywhere with ardour on the first appearance of the Methodist itinerants of those times, recognizing their apostolic character, ready to weep at their feet, and to die with them in their persecutions. He heard Grimshaw, and made

* Journal, anno 1755.

† Wesley's text on this occasion shows his spirit. It was 1 Corinthians xiii. 13: "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

many good resolutions, which were revived and deepened when he heard some of the humbler Methodist evangelists. "From that time," he writes, "my heart was so united to them that I dropped at once all my former companions and, blessed be God! I have not from that hour had one desire to turn back."

His scrupulous conscience was, however, a long time troubled with religious anxieties. He suspected that he was a hypocrite, and mentioned his fears to a friend, but got no comfort from the ambiguous reply given him. It was impossible, he says, to express the anguish he felt; he longed for death, though he believed himself unfit for it. But he omitted no religious duty; with the consent of his master, who had the good sense to esteem him highly, he prayed daily in the family, and soon conducted domestic worship in neighbouring households. Being alone a great part of one day, and much engaged in meditation and prayer, he felt a persuasion that God was willing to receive him. He left his business immediately, and went to his usual place of prayer; "in a moment," he says, "God broke in upon my soul in so wonderful a manner that I could no longer doubt of His forgiving love. I cried, 'My Lord and my God!' And with the spirit I was then in, I could have praised, and loved, and waited to all eternity."*

His habit of praying in families had now prepared him to conduct prayer-meetings, and as Methodism pressed all its available talent into use, he was soon holding such services among his neighbours. He was invited to Harding Moor, Lingobin, and Thornton. No Methodist itinerant had yet appeared in these places, but the faithful young evangelist was enabled in a short time to deliver up a society in each of them to the travelling preachers. Working at his business half the time for his subsistence, and exhorting and praying up and down the country, he founded Methodism not only in the villages named, but also at Long Addingham, at Greenough Hill, at Hartwith, and other places. At Pateley Bridge he was initiated into the common lot of the Methodist evangelists, and received his first baptism of persecution from the clods, clubs, and stones of the mob. His meek and pure spirit was not weak, but displayed during this and later trials a heroism which John Nelson would have admired. "We have done enough," cried the mob, who were instigated by the parish clergyman—"we have done enough to make an end of him." "I did, indeed," says he, "reel to and fro, and my head was broken with a stone. But I never found my

* Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, vol. ii. page 196.

soul more happy, nor was ever more composed in my closet. It was a glorious time, and there are several who date their conversion from that day." Such tests were very salutary to the early Methodist ministry. They drove cowards quickly from the ranks and made heroes of all others. He went to a neighbouring town, had his wounded head dressed, and the same day bravely preached in the street to a large crowd, many of whom had come with him from the scene of his sufferings. Some of the rioters had followed with them, but as their clerical leader was not present they were restrained, "and the Lord blessed us much," says the evangelist.

During four years did this good man travel about on foot, preaching and founding societies in neglected and obscure places. He was often, he says, thoroughly wet, and obliged to preach in his damp clothes from appointment to appointment. He worked at night that he might travel and preach by day. His appointments multiplied so fast that he was at last obliged to give up business, buy a horse, and take the field as an itinerant; it was much against his will, for though he had made full proof of his ministry his modesty shrunk from an honour so high, as he deemed it. The eccentric but generous Grimshaw could not fail to love such a man; driving about Yorkshire night and day on his evangelical tours, he witnessed the usefulness of Lee, and inspiriting him by his own example, sent him out on one of his extended circuits for a month. He thus appeared formally among the travelling preachers of the day, and never disappeared from their ranks until he was summoned away to his final rest.

We cannot, by tracing the travels of Whitefield and Wesley during this period, obtain a correct impression of the times. Their comparatively few persecutions would lead us to suppose that the populace had been almost universally subdued, but the subordinate labourers were still in many places confronting the fiercest mobs. It is incredible what trials Thomas Lee encountered during most of these years. In the winter of 1752 and 1753 the work of God prospered exceedingly, he writes, throughout his long routes in Yorkshire; "but persecution raged on every side." Wherever he went he was in perils, "carrying his life in his hands." One day, as he was going through Pateley, the captain of the mob, who was kept in constant pay, pursued him, and pulled him from his horse. The crowd soon collected about him, and one or another "struck up his heels," he says, "more than twenty times upon the stones." They pulled him into a house by the hair of his head, then pushed him back with one or two

upon him, and threw him upon the edge of the stone stairs. The fall nearly broke his back, and for many years he suffered from the injury. Thence they dragged him to the common sewer, rolled him in it for some time, and then drove him to the bridge and threw him into the water. When they drew him out he was unable to rise from the ground, his strength being quite spent. His wife, who, like Nelson's, was worthy of him, now came to his relief with a few friends. Seeing her helping him, some of the rioters asked, "What, are you a Methodist?" and giving her several blows, which made her bleed at the mouth, swore they would put her into the river. All this time he lay upon the ground, the mob being undetermined what to do with him. Some cried, "Make an end of him;" others were for sparing his life; but the dispute was cut short by their agreeing to put other Methodists into the river; and taking a number of them away for the purpose, they left him and his wife together. She endeavoured to raise him up, but having no strength he dropped to the ground again. She again raised him, and supported him some distance, when by her assistance he was enabled to mount a horse, and made out to ride to the house of a friend, where he was stripped from head to foot and washed. He left his wet clothes, and rode courageously to Greenough Hill, where a congregation was waiting for him, and though "much bruised and very weak," he preached from Psalm xxxiv. 19: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." He was not to be discouraged, and the next day was again proclaiming his message. His brethren followed him to a neighbouring appointment; but the leader of the mob came also, and with a long stick broke the glass of the windows while he preached. "This," he says, "made a little confusion at first, but afterwards the Lord poured down His blessing in an uncommon manner. Almost all were in tears, and the people took joyfully the spoiling of their goods." Thence he rode to Hartwith, where, he writes, "we had peace, and the power of the Lord was with us;" but when the preaching of the day was over he was so bruised and sore that he could not undress himself without aid. Nearly a whole year "hot persecutions" prevailed around him. The Methodists were violently abused in the streets. They applied to the Dean of Ripon for protection, but got none, for the Church would have suffered in the investigation. "But," remarks the persecuted preacher, "what made amends was, the members of the society loved each other dearly, and had exceedingly comfortable seasons together;" and after one of his days of sore

trial, he says of their meeting, "it seemed to us little less than heaven; and though it was a hard day, it was a blessed one to my soul." In later life he wrote that he remembered that once, during these times of trouble, when his life continually hung in suspense, a demurring thought occurred to him—"It is hard to have no respite, to be thus perpetually suffering." Immediately it was impressed upon his mind: "Did you not, when you were on the borders of despair, promise the Lord that if He would give you an assurance of His favour you would count no suffering, sorrow, nor affliction too great to be endured for His name's sake?" This reflection at once silenced all murmuring, and thenceforth he bore whatever befell him with patience and joy, and felt willing to bear it as long as God saw meet, if it were to the end of his life.

During the remainder of this period Thomas Lee preached on the Birstal, Leeds, Lincolnshire, Newcastle, and Manchester Circuits. His labours were greatly effective, his circuits incredibly long. We may judge somewhat of the labours of the Methodist preachers of that day from the fact that his "Leeds round" comprehended Sheffield and York, and extended into Derbyshire on the south, to Hull on the east, and to Newton on the north. His Manchester Circuit included Lancashire, Cheshire, parts of Shropshire and of Wales, Staffordshire, and part of Derbyshire. Throughout most of these years he suffered from mobs; sometimes the pulpit was torn out of the preaching-house, and burnt in the street; at others eggs, "filled with blood and sealed with pitch," were thrown in upon the assemblies, "making strange work wherever they alighted." Mire, clods, and stones flew about him as he rode into or out of the towns; the rioters beat him and his horse, knocked him off his horse, dragged him on the earth, poured water upon him from his head to his feet, covered him with paint," laying it on plenteously." Such was the treatment he received, particularly in Newark, in 1760. He was offered immediate relief if he would only promise to preach there no more; but this, he says, he could not do. He suffered on till he conquered, and could write: "Thus ended the trouble in Newark; since then the Word of God has prospered greatly, and a convenient preaching-house has been built, in which numerous congregations meet without disturbance."

After years of such labours and trials, Thomas Lee wrote to Wesley: "If I this moment saw all the sufferings I have had for His name's sake; if they were now spread before me I would say, 'Lord, if thou wilt give me strength I will now begin again, and thou shalt add to them lions' dens and fiery furnaces, and by thy

grace I will go through them all. My life, though attended with many crosses, has been a life of mercies. I count it one of the greatest favours that He still allows me to do a little for Him, and that He in any measure owns the Word which I am able to speak in His name. I beg that I may be humble at His feet all the days of my life, and may be more and more like Him whom my soul loveth."*

One of the lay heroes of Methodism, especially in the north, during this period, was Christopher Hopper, a man distinguished through many years of faithful service. He describes his early life as especially wicked.† He was prone to anger, and of a cruel disposition, and took, he says, a diabolical pleasure in hanging dogs, worrying cats, and killing birds and insects, wringing and cutting them to pieces. These, however, were the freaks of his misdirected childhood, for his heart was naturally tender, and his robust soul full of benificent energy, and during his youth his religious impressions were frequent and sometimes intense. He endeavoured to stifle them in singing, dancing, fishing, fowling, in hunting, cock-fighting, card-playing, racing, or "whatever the devil brought to town or country," but could not succeed. The universe appeared to him, he writes, as a vault wherein true comfort was entombed, and the sun itself as a lamp to show the gloomy horrors of a guilty mind. "I was not happy," he adds, "yet I believed there was something that could make me so, but I knew not what it was, nor where to find it." His vigorous mind had meanwhile acquired no small amount of scientific knowledge, and he became a school-teacher. Wesley passed through his neighbourhood; "he made a short blaze," says Hopper, "soon disappeared, and left us in consternation." But Hopper felt the impression of his sermon. "At this time there was a great bustle," he adds, "among all sorts and parties about religion, and I made a bustle among the rest. I said, I will read my Bible, say my prayers, go to the parish church, and reform my life." This, however, he soon perceived, was not sufficient to appease the moral cravings of his awakened spirit. Reeves, one of the heroic itinerants who had been indicted at Cork as a vagabond, passed through the town, and under his preaching the

* He died in 1786. Mary Lee, his devoted wife, who had stood by him amid mobs, wrote to Wesley of his last moments, that "he sobbed several times, looked up once and smiled, closed his eyes, and gently fell asleep." Wesley records his death in the minutes of 1787, and calls him "a faithful brother, and a good old soldier of Jesus Christ."

† Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, vol. i., p. 25.

baffled penitent saw what he yet needed. "I am broken to pieces," he said; "I am sick of sin, sick of myself, and sick of a vain world. I will therefore look unto the Lord." In deep compunction he called upon God for relief, and soon found it. God, angels, men, and the whole creation, he writes, appeared then to him in a new light, and stood related to him in a manner he never before knew. This was what Wesley and the Methodists called conversion; the renovation of the soul, by which it is placed in harmony with all its just and pure relations to men and to God, and, in the consciousness of that harmony, has a peace which passes expression. Wesley made him a class-leader. He began also to exhort with great success. His "poor old mother" was among the first fruits of his zeal. His brother and sister also soon acknowledged him the instrument of their conversion. Many of his former companions were reclaimed from their vices. The "fire kindled and the flame spread," and he was called to Low-Spen, Barlow, Woodside, Prudhoe, Newlands, Blanchland, Durham, Sunderland, and many other places, and before he was hardly aware what the result would be, he found himself preaching and itinerating. Persecutors attempted to seize and impress him for the army, but he escaped them in remarkable ways, sometimes leaving them to quarrel among themselves respecting him, and to end their disputes with "blows and bloody faces." Rectors and curates headed mobs to assail him, and answered his arguments with hard words and hard blows. He was indicted before a court, but nothing could be found against him. None of these things moved him; "I gave," he says, "my soul, body, and substance to my adorable Saviour, and I grieved I had no more to give."

Thus did Christopher Hopper do good service during these times, in founding and spreading Methodism in scores of towns and villages. He usually led a class every night, and preached three or four times every Sabbath. He made excursions to Newcastle, Sunderland, and Durham, and towns and villages around his home to the distance of twenty or thirty miles, preaching with great power. He did not, he says, regard much a little dirt, a few rotten eggs, the sound of a cow's horn, the noise of bells, or a few snow-balls in their season, but he found occasion sometimes to think more seriously of salutations from the mob in blows, stones, brickbats and bludgeons. When he had to preach with a patch on his wounded head he gloried in it as a badge for his Lord. He spread Methodism greatly in Allendale, "where a glorious work broke out." He went from town to town, and from

house to house, "singing, praying, preaching," and large multitudes followed him from place to place, weeping and praying. Whole congregations were sometimes melted into tears under his discourses, and "bowed down before the Lord as the heart of one man." He preached in barns, cock-pits, ale-houses, and wherever he could find a door open for him.

It would require many pages to detail the travels and labours of this faithful itinerant in England, Ireland, and Scotland; the many mobs he encountered, and the many societies he founded. He was the first Methodist lay preacher, as we have recorded, who went into Scotland; and all the north of England still cherishes his memory. He did much during our present period to extend Methodism in that part of the country. Cownley, who had been his fellow-labourer in Ireland, was also with him, and they formed several societies which continue to this day. On the banks of the Tyne, in Prudhoe and Nafferton, besides a variety of other places in that neighbourhood, numbers were awakened and converted. They endured no little persecution also. In one of Cownley's excursions into the Dales he was assaulted by a mob, which was headed by a clergyman. Warm from the village tavern, this zealous son of the Church advanced to the attack with the collected rabble. Cownley was preaching near the door of an honest Quaker, when the minister insisted that he was breaking the order of the Church, and began to recite the canon against conventicles. "If I am disorderly," answered the preacher, "you are not immaculate;" and he reminded him of the canon "for sober conversation, and against frequenting ale-houses." Confounded with the pertinent reply the parson retired for a while; but mustering up his courage and his ale-house friends he returned, and with threats of prosecution began to take down the names of the hearers. A Quaker, who was one of the congregation, hearing the menace, stepped up, and with unruffled gravity, clapped the curate on the back, and said, "Friend John, put my name down first." This ended the contest; quite disconcerted, the clergyman withdrew and left the field to the Methodist, and it was never afterwards yielded.

Both these noted itinerants were chief founders of Methodism in the Dales. During these years they met formidable difficulties, but left the region to their successors covered with a rich harvest, and the "Dales" soon stood prominently on the list of circuits in the Conference Minutes.*

* After labouring more than half a century in the itinerant ministry, Hopper died in 1802, aged eighty. While on his death-bed, the veteran

Of Charles Wesley's labours during the present decade, we have but disconnected traces in fragments of journals and undated letters. His family resided at Bristol, and as Methodism had now spread over the country, and was generally settled and systematized, and its superintendence by his brother was almost ubiquitous, he ceased to itinerate in the latter part of 1756, and thenceforward mostly confined himself to its head-quarters in London and Bristol.* His passages between these cities were continual; his pulpit and pastoral labours in each more arduous, if possible, than when he travelled more at large. In the metropolis he had charge of four principal chapels, besides other preaching-places, and the communion was administered by him every Sabbath, beginning at five o'clock in the morning. After the expulsion of Wheatley, he made an excursion over most of England, expressly to ascertain the moral condition of the lay ministry. Wheatley had reported that his own private flagrancies were common among these laborious and devoted men. Charles Wesley himself was suspicious that they were at least becoming disaffected towards the National Church, his prejudices for which were now more strenuous by far than those of his brother. He assembled them in small conferences, at various points, and was surprised at their usefulness, integrity, and talents. He speaks of only two or three as deficient in abilities, and one he sent back to his secular employment as intellectually incompetent for the ministry; but he brought to London only favourable reports of the piety and ministerial decorum of them all.†

Wesley lost, during the present period, one of the earliest coadjutors which the Established Church had afforded him. The Rev. John Meriton died on the 10th of August, 1753. He was a member of the first Wesleyan Conference, and attended most of the subsequent sessions down to the year of his death. He itinerated extensively in England, Wales, and Ireland. He was mobbed and imprisoned for the Gospel, and deserves a fuller record in the history of the great revival for which he laboured and suffered so much; but no traces of his useful life remain, except in brief yet frequent allusions of contemporary Methodist documents. Even the place of his death is unmentioned, and we know nothing

said to a friend: "I have not a doubt, no, not the shadow of a doubt; and as for the enemy, I know not what has become of him. I have neither seen him nor heard from him for some time. I think he has quitted the field."

* Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley, chap. 21.

† Ibid., chap. 17.

of his last hours. Charles Wesley, however, has embalmed his memory in an immortal elegy.*

His place in the Methodist ranks was more than supplied by another Churchman, who came to Wesley's assistance during the present period. In the "Short History of the People called Methodists," Wesley says: "March 13th, 1757, finding myself weak at Snowfields, I prayed that God, if He saw good, would send me help at the chapels. He did so. As soon as I had done preaching, Mr. Fletcher came, who had just then been ordained priest, and hastened to the chapel on purpose to assist me, as he supposed me to be alone. How wonderful are the ways of God! When my bodily strength failed, and no clergyman in England was able and willing to assist me, He sent me help from the mountains of Switzerland! and a helpmeet for me in every respect! Where could I have found such another?" Fletcher thus comes upon the scene, and comes as an angel of light.

As the traveller sails along the north shore of the Lake of Geneva, Switzerland, interested in its rare scenery as well as in the literary associations which Gibbon, De Stael, and others have left, to Lausanne and Coppet, his eye is attracted by Nyon, a beautiful village between these towns. The large homestead of the Flecheres, descendants of a noble Savoyard house, stands prominently out among the humble dwellings of the villagers, and is still occupied by the family, who continue to maintain the name and religious reputation of their house. John William de la Flechere was born there in 1729.† He was early religiously inclined, and was designed by his parents for the Church. His superior intellect gave him distinguished success in the prize competitions of the University of Geneva. On completing his studies, he abandoned his intention of entering the ministry, one of his objections being his Arminian sentiments, and his consequent inability conscientiously to subscribe to the Calvinistic doctrines of the Church of his country. He chose a military life, and, going to Portugal, received a captain's commission for Brazil, but accidentally failing to sail at the appointed time, he departed for Germany; a similar disappointment there induced him to go over to England. In London he heard the gospel faithfully preached, and became convinced that, notwithstanding his strict religious habits, he was yet an unregenerated man. "Is it pos-

* See it in Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 18, English edition. It is omitted in the American edition.

† Life of Rev. John William de la Flechere, etc., by Joseph Benson, chap. i.

sible," he wrote, "that I who have always been accounted so religious, who have made divinity my study, and received the premium of piety from my university for writings on divine subjects—is it possible that I should yet be so ignorant as not to know what faith is?" After a protracted struggle, he was enabled to "believe with the heart unto righteousness." Never was the doctrine of faith as the condition of spiritual life, the potent element which "works by love," and secures both inward holiness and outward good works, more demonstrably exemplified than in the subsequent career of this rare man. At Wesley's instance, he took orders in the National Church. On March 6th, 1757, he was ordained a deacon, and on the following Sabbath a priest. He hastened the same day to Wesley at West Street Chapel, and assisted him in his services. Thenceforward he was Wesley's most ardent coadjutor in the Establishment; his counsellor, his fellow-traveller at times in his evangelical itinerancy, an attendant at his Conferences, the champion of his theological views, and, above all, a saintly example of the life and power of Christianity as taught by Methodism, read and known, admired and loved by Methodists throughout the world. Madeley, his vicarage, is familiar and dear to them next to Epworth itself. He will reappear often in our narrative, and always with a reflection of the glory of that Divine Presence with which he habitually lived in an intimacy and purity rarely if ever excelled by even the holiest men who have walked with God on earth.

Wesley could not but be deeply impressed at the present time by the remarkable results of the Methodistic movement. He began his career without an anticipation of its consequences; but the nation had now been, to a great extent, morally awakened, and the future was apparently pregnant with greater results than the past. Reflecting on the subject while in London, he says: "From a deep sense of the amazing work which God has of late years wrought in England, I preached on those words, Ps. cxlvii. 20, 'He hath not dealt so with any nation;' no, not even with Scotland nor New England. In both these God has, indeed, made bare His arm, yet not in so astonishing a manner as among us." This must appear, he argued, to all who impartially consider, 1. The number of persons who had been reformed; 2. The swiftness of the work in many, who were both convinced and truly converted in a few days; 3. Its depth in most of these, changing the heart, as well as the whole conversation; 4. Its clearness, enabling them boldly to say, "Thou hast loved me; thou hast given thyself for me;" 5. Its continuance. In Scotland and New

England, revivals had occurred at several times, and for some weeks or months together; but the Methodist movement had lasted for about eighteen years without any observable intermission. Above all, he adds, let it be remarked that a considerable number of the regular clergy were engaged in the great revival in Scotland, and in New England above a hundred, perhaps as eminent as any in the whole province, not only for piety, but also for abilities; whereas in England there were only two or three inconsiderable clergymen, with a few young unlettered men, and these were opposed by well-nigh all the clergy as well as laity in the nation. "He that remarks this must needs own both that this is a work of God, and that He hath not wrought so in any other nation."

Wesley had now passed the middle period of life; his opinions had in some respects moderated, but not his earnestness nor his labours. An habitual cheerfulness marked his daily life. His continual intercourse with all classes of men made him at home with all. He relished a good story, and could tell one with zest; and his conversation was often anecdotal and playful. Both his religious feelings and natural temperament were exempt from gloominess. He loved children, and they never failed to love him. Books were his daily entertainment, and a relief to his increasing cares; he indulged in not only the graver kinds of reading, but in poetry, the drama,* fiction somewhat, and especially the curious and entertaining researches of antiquaries. But notwitstanding these reliefs, his natural love of retirement and of studious habits led him often to long, amid his daily preachings and travels, and the care of all his Churches, for leisure and a place of rest. While hastening, like a courier, over Ireland, he paused on his way to Dublin in a village, among "a little earnest company," and wrote: "Oh, who should drag me into a great city, if I did not know there is *another world?* How gladly could I spend the remainder of a busy life in solitude and retirement!"

* The pious zeal of one of his preachers deprived him of the honour of taking rank among the numerous commentators of Shakspeare. John Pawson, a very holy man, had charge of the City Road Chapel after Wesley's death, and occupied the adjacent parsonage, Wesley's London home. He expurgated its library with iconoclastic zeal. Wesley's intimate friend and executor, Rev. Henry Moore, says, that "among the books which Mr. Pawson laid violent hands on and destroyed, was a fine quarto edition of *Shakspeare's Plays* (presented to Mr. Wesley by a gentleman in Dublin), *the margin of which was filled with critical notes by Mr. Wesley himself.*" The good man judged them, and the work itself, "as among the things which tended not to edification." Life of Rev. Henry Moore, p. 180. New York.

Entering a solitary house on the romantic coast of Wales, where no other dwelling could be seen, he envied its humble tenants. "Here I was," he wrote, "in a little quiet, solitary spot, *maxime animo exoptatum meo!*—most heartily desired by me, where no human voice was heard but those of the family." Rest in this life he knew could never be his lot, but he still hoped for a home.

In 1749, as has been stated, he designed to marry Grace Murray, who would have made him a congenial wife; her natural amiability, her accomplishments and piety had evidently won his affection; and he felt profoundly his disappointment, but relieved it by pursuing, with undiminished energy, his accustomed labours.*

With the advice of his friend and counsellor, Perronet, of Shoreham, he married, in 1752, Mrs. Vizelle, a widow lady of wealth, of intelligence, and of apparently every qualification necessary to render his home happy and exemplary. At his own instance, her ample property was secured, before the marriage, to herself and her children. She understood that he was not to abate his itinerant labours. He pursued them as usual, and in about two months after his marriage wrote in his Journal: "I cannot understand how a Methodist preacher can answer it to God to preach one sermon or travel one day less in a married than in a single state. In this respect surely, 'it remaineth that they who have wives be as though they had none.'" His wife travelled with him for some time, but soon very naturally grew dissatisfied with a life so restless and so incompatible with the tastes and convenience of her sex, Unwilling to travel herself, she became equally dissatisfied with her husband's habitual ab-

* Watson (Life of Wesley, chap. 10) gives an extract from an unpublished letter of Wesley, which proves both how deeply he felt, and how resolutely he bore his disappointment. "The sons of Zeruiah were too strong for me. The whole world fought against me, but, above all, *my own familiar friend*. [Charles Wesley.] Then was the word fulfilled: 'Son of man, behold I take from thee the desire of thine eyes at a stroke, yet shalt thou not lament, neither shall thy tears run down.' The fatal, irrevocable stroke was struck on Thursday last. Yesterday I saw my friend (that was), and him to whom she is sacrificed. But why should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Jackson (Life of Charles Wesley, chap. 17) says that several letters of Wesley to his termagant wife, during his worst trials from her, show "the utmost tenderness of affection, such as few female hearts could have withstood, and justify the opinion that had it been his happiness to be married to a person who was worthy of him, he could have been one of the most affectionate husbands that ever lived. Those who think that he was constitutionally cold and repulsive utterly mistake his character."

sence. Her discontent took at last the form of a monomaniacal jealousy. During twenty years she persecuted him with unfounded suspicions and intolerable annoyances, and it is among the most admirable proofs of the genuine greatness of his character that his public career never wavered, never lost one jot of its energy or success, during this protracted domestic wretchedness. She repeatedly deserted him, but returned at his own earnest instance. She opened, interpolated, and then exposed to his enemies his correspondence,* and sometimes travelled a hundred miles to see, from a window, who accompanied him in his carriage. At last, taking with her portions of his Journals and papers, which she never restored, she left him with the assurance that she would never return. His allusion to the fact in his Journal is characteristically laconic. He knew not, he says, the immediate cause of her determination, and adds: "*Non eam reliqui, non dimissi, non revocabo*"—I did not forsake her, I did not dismiss her, I will not recall her. She lived about ten years after leaving him. Her tombstone commemorated her virtues as a parent and a friend, but not as a wife.†

To his domestic trials were added, in the latter part of 1753, the sufferings and anxieties of a perilous sickness. His symptoms —pains in the chest, cough, fever and debility—indicated a rapid consumption, and his physicians required an entire cessation of his labours and retirement in the country. The London societies became alarmed, and great anxiety soon spread among his people throughout the nation, for never before was his continued agency so apparently necessary to the stability of Methodism. Public prayers were offered for his restoration at the Foundry, and throughout the land as the afflicting intelligence extended. Charles Wesley hastened to the metropolis, hardly expecting to see him alive. Unable to sit on his horse, he was conveyed to the country in a coach. On one day his death was hourly expected by his attendants; he was conscious of his danger, and, to prevent

* She resided in Wesley's parsonage at the Foundry. Charles Wesley, whose family still continued at Bristol, found it necessary to guard them against allusions to her, in their correspondence with him, as she opened his letters. Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 21.

† Southey is candid in his account of this case. (Life of Wesley, chap. 24.) Watson supplies additional and necessary facts. (Life of Wesley, chap. 10.) There is an intimation in Wesley's Journal as late as June 30, 1772, which seems to imply a temporary reconciliation. "Calling," he says, "at a little inn on the Moors, I spoke a few words to an old man there, as my wife did to the woman of the house." At her death she left him a ring. Coke and Moore's Life of Wesley, ii. 4.

"vile panegyric," wrote for his own epitaph this remarkable passage: "Here lieth the body of John Wesley, a brand plucked from the burning,* who died of a consumption in the fifty-first year of his age; not leaving, after his debts are paid, ten pounds behind him.† Praying God be merciful to me, an unprofitable sinner, he ordered that this, if any inscription, should be placed on his tombstone."

With his usual equanimity he pursued his literary labours during this season of general anxiety among his people. He finished the books which he designed to insert in his "Christian Library," transcribed a part of his Journals for the press, and retiring, by order of his physician, to the Hotwells near Bristol, began there his Notes on the New Testament, with a new version of the text; a work unrivalled among Biblical commentaries for its terseness, condensation, and pertinency, and a recognized standard of Methodist theology throughout his "Connection." In the spring he resumed his itinerant labours with renewed health and undiminished energy.

To his many other trials was added during this period one which, by its undeserved and unexpected severity, and its pernicious public influence, occasioned him no little suffering. Hervey the author of the "Meditations" and "Contemplations," "Theron and Aspasio," and other works noted more for their meretricious style than for any intrinsic excellence, had been a member of the "Holy Club" at Oxford. Eminently pious, but feeble in health, he pursued, after leaving the university, a course of clerical labour in a retired parish; he continued, however, to maintain a deep interest in the progress of Methodism, and sharing the Calvinistic opinions of Whitefield, was in habitual correspondence with him and Lady Huntingdon. He acknowledged himself to be under the greatest obligations to Wesley till he entered the controversial lists against his Arminianism. He had admitted to his confidence William Cudworth, a man who was chiefly responsible for his alienation from the Wesleys, and at whose instigation he commenced his unfortunate "Eleven Letters." Hervey died in 1758; as his end approached, he directed that the manuscript of this work should be destroyed. His brother, however, judged that it would be a desirable pecuniary speculation to publish it, and placed it in the hands of Cudworth to be finished, giving him liberty "to put out and put in" whatever he judged expedient.‡ Cudworth's Antinomian sentiments led him

* See note on page 37. † See page 201.

‡ See Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 21; and Coke and Moore's Life of Wesley, iii. 2.

to abhor Wesley's opinions; he caricatured them relentlessly by his interpolations of Hervey's pages, and sent forth in Hervey's name the first and most reckless and odious caveat against Methodism that ever emanated from any one who had sustained friendly relations to it. It was republished in Scotland, and tended much to forestall the spread of Methodism there. Wesley felt keenly the injustice and heartlessness of this attack, but his sorrow was mitigated by the knowledge that most of the abuse in the publication was interpolated, and that Hervey, who had delighted to call him his "friend and father," knew him too well to have thus struck at him from the grave. He answered the book; but time has answered it more effectually—time, the invincible guardian of the characters of great men.

Wesley had now the sympathy and co-operation of some zealous and able men among the regular clergy. He was still anxious that the momentous work on his hands should at last obtain the patronage and be continued under the auspices of the Church. He lamented the general lack of zeal, the inefficiency, the secular motives, the ignorance and stupidity which characterized many of its pastors. In 1756 he sent forth his "Address to the Clergy;" it pleads earnestly for the best intellectual qualifications of their office, and contends that without a knowledge of the original tongues of the Scriptures no clergyman can, "in the most effectual manner," expound and defend them; "for without a knowledge of the literal meaning of every word, verse, and chapter, there can be no firm foundation on which the spiritual meaning can be built." But not for Biblical knowledge only does he plead; Logic, History, and the Natural Sciences are advocated with much earnestness. He also insists upon the highest style of manners as necessary in the office; "all the courtesy of the gentleman joined with the correctness of the scholar." St. Paul, he says, showed himself before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, "one of the best bred men, one of the finest gentlemen in the world." He rebukes with a tone of severe scorn the common remark of English families in high life, that "the son who is fit for nothing else will do well enough for a parson." But on no prevalent evil of the order does he spend more remark and force than on the practical simony with which preferment was conducted. Gain, as a motive to the office, beyond a comfortable subsistence, he reprobates as a disgrace to the profession, a profanation of its apostolic prestige, and a provocation of the ill-will of the people. The moral standard of qualification for the ministry he lifts to the highest altitude. He would have his

clerical brethren return to the simplicity, self-sacrifice, and martyr-spirit of the first ages, and this he pronounced the great requisite of the times for the salvation of the Church and the nation. He would have them, in other words, become genuine Methodist preachers. "Is not," he asks, "His will the same with regard to us as with regard to His first ambassadors? Is not His love and is not His power still the same as they were in the ancient days? Know we not that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? Why then may not you be as burning and shining lights as those that shone seventeen hundred years ago? Do you desire to partake of the same burning love? of the same shining holiness? Do you design it, aim at it, press on to this mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? Do you constantly and earnestly pray for it? Then, as the Lord liveth, ye shall attain it!" His hope of an evangelical clergy in the National Establishment was not, however, to be verified in his own day, and Methodism was compelled to take care of itself.

CHAPTER III.

CALVINISTIC AND MORAVIAN METHODISM: 1750—1760.

Whitefield "ranging"—His Good Humour—His Health—His steady Zeal—The New Tabernacle—Cordiality between Wesley and Whitefield—Whitefield in America—In Ireland—Terrible Mob in Dublin—Distinguished Methodistic Churchmen—Berridge—Extraordinary Religious Interest at Everton—Singular Conversion—Romaine—His Persecutions—His Labours—His Writings—Madan—His Conversion—His Eloquence—His Labours—Venn—His Connection with the Methodist Founders—Moravian Methodism—Ingham—His Numerous Societies in Yorkshire—Their Discipline—Their attempted Union with Wesley—Their Overthrow by Sandemanianism—Wesley's Legislative Ability—Death of Lady Ingham—Ingham's Death and Character.

EARLY in 1750 Whitefield went forth from London "ranging" as he called it, through the land, and preaching with his usual power at Gloucester, Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth, Nottingham, Manchester, and other places, till he reached Edinburgh. "Invitations," he wrote, "came from every direction. . . . I want more tongues, more bodies, more souls for the Lord Jesus."* He preached on his route about one hundred sermons, to a hundred and fifty thousand hearers, in less than three months. It

* Gillies's Whitefield, chap. 14.

was amazing, he said, to see how the people were prepared for him in places which he had never visited before; the Methodist lay preachers had been over most, if not all the ground, had triumphed over persecutions, and had prepared the whole land for him.

His labours in Scotland at this visit are not minutely recorded, but are said to have left a deep impression; he preached from two to four times a-day till his health yielded. Many, he wrote, were under conviction, and hundreds received benefit and consolation from the Word. In a few months he was ranging through Wales, where he rode five hundred miles, preaching twice every day.

In 1751 he passed over to Ireland; he found in Dublin "many converted souls," and his congregations were large, and "heard for eternity." He hastened among the country towns, preaching daily, and in the most of the island he discovered that a great evangelical work had been advancing, though through prodigious opposition. Large numbers were converted not only from Popery, but to a truly spiritual life, at Athlone, Dublin, Limerick, Cork, and various other places. Wesley and his lay preaches had stood the brunt of the first mobs, and had at last conquered, so that at this visit Whitefield scarcely met with opposition. Hundreds prayed for him as he left Cork; and it is said that many Papists promised to leave their priests if he would stay among them. He preached eighty times during his short stay of less than two months, and left the island for Scotland, well satisfied with the brief retrospect. "Providence," he wrote, "has wonderfully prepared my way, and overruled everything for my greater acceptance. Everywhere there seems to be a shaking among the dry bones, and the trembling lamps of God's people have been supplied with fresh oil. The Word ran and was glorified."

On reappearing in Glasgow, he was received with renewed enthusiasm. Thousands attended his services every morning and evening, and seemed never to be weary. He was followed from town to town; and many influential clergymen shared the popular enthusiasm, admiring his devout spirit, and delighting in his extraordinary eloquence and his social qualities; for in the latter respect one of them describes him as exceedingly entertaining, and as "reviving" as in his sermons. A playful humour, rich in evangelical sentiment, strange as the collocation may seem, enlivened his social intercourse, and especially his dinner-table converse. "One might challenge," says Gillies, alluding to this

visit, "one might challenge the sons of pleasure, with all their wit, good humour, and gaiety, to furnish entertainment so agreeable."*

At Edinburgh, the longer he stayed the larger were his congregations. In about twenty-eight successive days he preached to nearly ten thousand hearers a-day. It was during these excessive labours that we first hear of his habit of "vomiting blood" after preaching. It would have terrified and sent into retirement, or to a healthier climate, any ordinary man; by Whitefield it now came to be considered a relief to his over-excited system, and seems to have continued during most of the remainder of his life.†

He returned to London to embark again for America, where he spent the winter, labouring chiefly in Georgia and South Carolina. Unhappily we have no important records of this visit; but it was doubtless, like all the rest of his career, a series of unintermitted labours. The epistolary fragments which afford glimpses of his movements, palpitate with life. "I intend to begin," he wrote, on hearing of the death of Doddridge—"I intend to begin, for as yet I have done nothing; God quicken my tardy pace, and help me to do much work in a little time." In June, 1752, he was again in London, planning tours of the whole country. "Oh that I could fly from pole to pole publishing the everlasting gospel!" he wrote, as he left the city to "range" through the west. At Bristol he stood up amid "Moorfields congregations," and saw the "old times revived again," and during a fortnight flew like a herald over Wales, preaching twenty times and travelling on horseback three hundred miles. We next hear of him in Scotland again, where he rejoices over immense congregations, and the news of "a dozen young men" who were awakened under his preaching ten years before, and were now useful preachers. But soon he is on his southern route, passing as "a flame of fire." The enthusiasm which had now borne him along as on wings for fifteen years suffered no abatement, but seemed rather to kindle into increased fervour. As he hastened southward from town to town, he wrote at Sheffield: "Since I left Newcastle I have scarce known sometimes whether I was in heaven or on earth. At Leeds, Birstal, Haworth, and Halifax, thousands and thousands have flocked twice a-day to hear the Word of Life. The Word has run so swiftly at Leeds that friends are come to fetch me back, and I am now

* Memoirs of Whitefield, note, chap. 15.

† Memoirs of Rev. Cornelius Winter, by Rev. William Jay.

going to Rotherham, Wakefield, Leeds, York, and Epworth. Oh that I had as many tongues as there are hairs upon my head! Fain would I die preaching." In fine, the whole temperament and genius of the man, as well as his religious sentiments, were suited to the extraordinary course of life he had adopted. Preaching was as natural to him as flight to an eagle.

On March 1st, 1753, he laid the foundation-stone of the new Tabernacle, in London, on the site of the old structure which had been the theatre of his eloquence and usefulness. Wesley lent him the use of the Spitalfields' Chapel while the new edifice was rising, and their harmony became more than ever manifest. Whitefield continually revealed, during these times, the magnanimity of his great soul by proofs of liberality towards his Arminian coadjutors. He visited Norwich at the crisis of the trouble of Wheatley, and Bolton at the defection of Bennett, and in both cases pleaded with the societies to maintain their union and their fidelity to Wesley. As he formed few societies himself, most of his preaching excursions were, in effect, recruiting tours for the Wesleyan societies and the evangelical Dissenters. When Wesley was sick he hastened to visit him, but first sent a letter, written from the fulness of his heart. "If," he said, "you will be in the land of the living, I hope to pay my last respects to you next week. If not, farewell! My heart is too big! Tears trickle down too fast; and I fear you are too weak for me to enlarge. May underneath you be Christ's everlasting arms! I commend you to His never-failing mercy, and am your most affectionate, sympathizing, and afflicted younger brother in the gospel."

During this year he made what is supposed to have been his most successful campaign in England; we have not its details, but know that in three months he travelled twelve hundred miles, and delivered a hundred and eighty discourses to hundreds of thousands of hearers.* The Arminian Methodists welcomed him everywhere to their chapels, but no chapels could accommodate the people. At Leeds twenty thousand hung upon his word. All Yorkshire was roused with interest; the Methodists thinned out the Minster and overawed the mob, says one of his biographers.† Glasgow and Edinburgh again poured their tens of thousands out upon the public green to hear his thrilling words, and London rallied its still greater hosts.

In March, 1754, he was again on the deck for America, accompanied by a score of poor children, who were to receive shelter

* Philip's Life and Times of Whitfield, chap. 19. † Ibid.

in the Orphan House at his Bethesda, where he found a hundred and six persons in his family, "black and white." He was soon ranging northward. At Philadelphia and New York the former scenes of enthusiastic interest were again enacted. Everywhere, he wrote, "a Divine power accompanied the Word; prejudices were removed, and a more effectual door opened than ever for preaching the Gospel." He projected a tour of two thousand miles to Boston, and back again to Georgia, and passed over it as on a triumphal march. In Rhode Island and Massachusetts he found "souls flying like doves to the windows," and opposition everywhere falling before him. President Burr accompanied him, and says that his magical eloquence attracted in the eastern metropolis weeping thousands every morning to his ante-breakfast sermons. Whitefield writes that he never saw a more effectual door opened for the truth. The godless were awakened, believers quickened, and enemies made at peace with him. Such was the eagerness of the crowd that it was often impossible for him to get into the pulpit except by climbing in at the windows. He went as far as Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where a cavalcade came out to meet him; and returning he preached two or three times a-day through his entire route. It was, perhaps, his most effective campaign in America. The trumpet of the truth was sounded along its whole Atlantic coast, and the religious interest of all the colonies was roused. He himself regarded it as the most important of his evangelical expeditions: "What have I seen? Dagon falling everywhere before the ark; enemies silenced or made to own the finger of God; and the friends of Jesus triumphing in His glorious conquests. A hundredth part cannot be told. We had scarcely one dry meeting." On his southern route hearers flocked forty and fifty miles to the points at which he was to pass. Unquestionably these mighty labours did much to sustain and project forward those evangelical agencies which have since made the nation an arena of religious revivals and philanthropies. They were especially a fitting preliminary to the more systematic evangelization which Arminian Methodism was about to extend over the continent.

In May, 1755, he was again in London, and began to preach amid the uproar of mobs at Long Acre, near the theatres; drums, bells, and yells saluted him whenever he appeared there. Foote caricatured him on the boards of the theatre. Letters threatening his life were sent to him, and a ruffian came into the pulpit to attack him with clenched fist; but he persisted till at last he saw rise, as his battery at the West End, the Tottenham Court

Chapel, subsequently renowned in the history of religion in London.

In 1757 he revisited both Scotland and Ireland; the former with a heartier reception than ever before, the latter with an Irish welcome of stones, clods, and shillalahs. The Lord High Commissioner at Edinburgh treated him with distinction, and the clergy invited him to a public dinner. They also flocked to hear him, and as many as a hundred were present at a time in his immense congregations. On passing from these hospitalities into Ireland, he expected the cordial treatment he had received at his preceding visit; but while preaching on Oxmantown Green, in Dublin, he received what was nearly, as he said, his "parting blow from Satan." He finished his sermon, but could not return to his lodgings by the way he came. It was barricaded by the solid mass of the mob, so that he had to go nearly half a mile from one end of the Green to the other, through hundreds of excited Papists. A soldier and four Methodist preachers accompanied him part of the way, but fled for their lives, and left him to the mercy of the rioters. Stones flew about him from all directions, and he reeled under them till he was breathless and dripping with blood. His strong beaver hat protected his head for some time, but was at last knocked off, and left it defenceless. He received several severe wounds, one near his temples. He thought of Stephen, he says, and as he believed that he received more blows than the ancient martyr, he had great hopes that like him he should "be despatched, and go off in this bloody triumph" to the presence of his Lord; but he staggered at last to a door, and was sheltered. Meanwhile the mob broke up his field-pulpit, and severely beat and wounded his servant with the fragments. Whitefield lay speechless and panting for some time in the house where he had taken refuge. A few of his friends had followed him, and now washed the blood from his wounds; but as soon as he revived, the family, fearing their house would be demolished, entreated him to leave them. As it was perilous for him to go out, a mechanic offered him his wig and cloak as a disguise. He put them on; but, ashamed of such apparent cowardice, threw them off with disdain, determined to face the populace in his proper habit. A Methodist preacher brought a coach to the door, Whitefield leaped in and rode unhurt, and with what he calls "Gospel triumph," through whole streets of Papists, who threatened him at every step of the way. None, he says, but those who were spectators of the scene could form an idea of the affection with which he was received by the weeping, mourning,

but now joyful Methodists. A Christian surgeon was ready to dress his wounds; after which he went into the preaching-house, and having given a word of exhortation, "joined in a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to Him who makes our extremity His opportunity, who stills the noise of the waves and the madness of the people."

Under this memorable sermon, John Edwards, one of Wesley's ablest preachers, received the truth, and afterwards devoted himself to similar labours and trials. Whitefield escaped from Dublin, but immediately resumed his work, preaching with great power at Athlone, Limerick, and Cork; but soon left the island for more inviting fields, and returned no more.

During the remainder of our present period he made several tours in England, Wales, and Scotland, and the public interest augmented with every visit; but in the north, with undiminished popularity, he had to adopt Wesley's lamentation over the moral insensibility of the Scotch. They crowded to hear him; "but it is a dead time," he wrote; "little or no stirring among the dry bones." He comforted himself, however, by his Calvinistic opinion of the Divine sovereignty. Wesley declined that consolation.

It was during these times that some of the most important coadjutors afforded by the National Church to the Calvinistic Methodists became prominently identified with the Methodistic movement. The names of Berridge, Romaine, Madan, and Venn are consecrated in its annals.

Rev. John Berridge, vicar of Everton, had been preaching for years without, as he believed, a true knowledge of personal religion. In 1758 he invited a visit from Wesley. "A few months ago," writes the latter, "he was thoroughly convinced that by grace are we saved through faith. Immediately he began to proclaim the redemption that is in Jesus, and God confirmed his own words, exactly as He did at Bristol in the beginning, by working repentance and faith in the hearers, and with the same violent outward symptoms."* These violent symptoms were, indeed, more extraordinary than had occurred under the preaching of either Wesley or Whitefield. Wesley has recorded them with much minuteness, and while it cannot be denied that they sometimes took an extreme and even fanatical form, yet they were but the concomitants, the human infirmities, of a profound and wide-spread religious reformation. The Rev. Mr. Hicks, vicar of Wrestlingworth, Berridge's neighbour, entered zealously into the excitement. The whole region round about was astir. Curious

* Journal, anno 1758.

or anxious multitudes came ten, twenty, and even thirty miles to hear these awakened clergymen, and witness the wonders which attended their labours; and few came who did not return to spread the excitement by a renewed religious life. Berridge's church was usually thronged, aisles, portals, and windows. The hearers crowded up the pulpit steps until the preacher was sometimes nearly stifled with their breath, and scores fell helplessly to the floor, and were carried to the parsonage. The assembly was often swayed with irrepressible emotion, sometimes crying out with groans and sobs, at others pervaded by a sound of "loud breathing, like that of people gasping for life." A spectator describes the faces of "all the believers present as really shining at times;" and he adds, "such a beauty, such a look of extreme happiness, and at the same time of Divine love and simplicity, did I never see in human faces till now." Berridge soon began to itinerate almost as energetically as Grimshaw; and Everton, like Haworth, became the centre of an extensive range of evangelical labours. He often rode a hundred miles and delivered ten or twelve sermons a-week. He preached much in the open air. At Cambridge, standing upon a table, he addressed ten thousand hearers. At Stafford, where he had been curate, he was determined to preach "a Gospel sermon," such as he declared he had never preached there when responsible for the souls of the people; he did so in a field to a host of wondering hearers. A robust man, who had been "chief captain of Satan's forces" in the town, and was noted for his profanity and readiness to horsewhip the Methodists, was suddenly seized with the "violent symptoms" which had before excited his mirth or his wrath. "I heard," says a correspondent of Wesley who was present, "a dreadful noise on the farther side of the congregation, and, turning thither, saw him coming forward, the most horrible human figure I ever saw. His large wig and hair were coal-black; his face distorted beyond all description. He roared incessantly, throwing and clapping his hands together with his whole force. Several were terrified, and hastened out of his way. I was glad to hear him after awhile pray aloud. Not a few of the triflers grew serious, while his kindred and acquaintance were unwilling to believe even their own eyes and ears. They would fain have got him away, but he fell to the earth, crying, 'My burden! my burden! I cannot bear it!' Some of his brother scoffers were calling for horsewhips, till they saw him extended on his back at full length. His agonies lasted some hours; then his body and soul were eased."

It was estimated that, during one year, at least four thousand souls had been awakened in this revival. Wesley returned to the scene repeatedly to aid his two clerical brethren. He was startled at its marvels, and acknowledged the human infirmity which mixed with them; but accredited not only as a Christian, but as a Christian philosopher, the inestimable good which attended the excitement. Its excesses subsided, but its blessings remained. At a visit, after the novelty of the excitement had passed, Wesley preached for Berridge, and observed "a remarkable difference as to the *manner* of the work. None now were in trances, none cried out, none fell down. A low murmur was heard, and many were refreshed with the *multitude of peace*."

Reviewing the case, he remarked that more or less of these outward symptoms had usually attended the beginning of a general religious interest. So it had been in New England, Scotland, Holland, Ireland, and many parts of England; but after a time they gradually decreased, and the revival proceeded more quietly. Those whom it pleases God to employ on such occasions ought, he adds, to be "quite passive in this respect; they should choose nothing, but leave entirely to Him all the circumstances of His own work."

Berridge continued his zealous course during more than twenty years. His theological opinions allied him with Whitefield, and he became a notable champion of Calvinistic Methodism. He was rich, but liberal to excess, and rented preaching-houses, supported lay preachers, and aided poor societies with an unsparing hand. He was a laborious student, and nearly as familiar with the classic languages as with his native tongue. Like most good men whose temperament renders them zealous, he had a rich vein of humour, and his ready wit played freely but harmlessly through both his public and private discourse.*

Romaine had distinguished himself at Oxford, and as curate in Devonshire and Essex. He had met Warburton in controversy on the "Divine Legation of Moses." In the metropolis he was appointed to the Lectureship of St. Botolph's, and that of St. Dunstan in the West, as also to St. George's, Hanover Square, where he was morning preacher. His discourses were original and powerful, and his eloquence, inspired as much by his earnestness as by his genius, soon attracted larger crowds than could be

* Berridge died in 1793, aged 76. A host of evangelical clergymen had by that time appeared in the National Church, chiefly through the influence of Methodism. The venerable Simeon, of Cambridge, and several others of them, bore Berridge to the grave, with the tears of thousands.

accommodated in his churches. He had caught the Methodistic spirit of the times, and was now found to be too zealous, too urgent a preacher, and too strict a pastor for the satisfaction of his patrons. At St. Dunstan, where he held two lectureships, clamorous opposition was raised against him, and his rector refused him admission to the pulpit. The dispute was brought before the Court of King's Bench, and one of his lectureships was taken from him by the decision; but the other was confirmed, and endowed with a salary of eighteen pounds a-year, which, notwithstanding his exalted talents and devoted character, was his chief support from the Church. On being removed from Hanover Square, Lady Huntingdon appointed him one of her chaplains. He thus became openly connected with the Methodists, but retained some time the lectureship of West Dunstan, where, however, his evangelical zeal and doctrines gave such offence to the rector that he usually took possession of the pulpit before Romaine could finish the liturgy, and thereby prevented his preaching. Another ruse of his opponents was to keep the church doors closed till the latest moment, while the crowds congregated in the streets, and at last rushed into the doors so precipitately as to endanger their lives. The wardens sometimes refused to light the church, and often did Romaine address the multitude with but a single taper, which he held himself in one hand, while gesticulating with the other in those powerful appeals that sent trembling amid the multitude, and at once astonished and exasperated his enemies.

It was about the beginning of our present period that he entered the Methodist ranks as chaplain to Lady Huntingdon. He preached often with Whitefield, the Wesleys, Fletcher, and others at her mansion. He made frequent evangelical tours into the country, and proclaimed the Word at all opportunities with signal effect. He first took his stand as an "open-air" preacher at Haworth with his friend Grimshaw. He laboured with Ingham's Moravian Methodist societies in Yorkshire, and travelled extensively in Sussex and Hampshire with the Countess of Huntingdon, preaching incessantly. He accompanied Madan to Everton, and co-operated with Berridge amid the extraordinary scenes that occurred there and throughout the neighbouring region. His opinions were strongly Calvinistic, and he was unreserved in his dissent from some of the peculiar sentiments of Wesley, but met him frequently in the catholic services of Lady Huntingdon's mansion, sharing in his prayers and preaching, and receiving from his hands the Lord's Supper. Romaine became

rector of St. Andrew, Wardrobe, and St. Anne's, Blackfriars, and died a faithful adherent to the National Church. His numerous works—"the Life of Faith," "Walk of Faith," "Triumph of Faith," "Self-existence of Jesus Christ," "Sermons on the Hundred and Seventh Psalm," and others—are precious exponents of the resuscitated evangelical spirit of the times, and continue to have a salutary influence on the Calvinistic piety of England and America.

A young lawyer of brilliant talents and aristocratic relations was in the habit of meeting with his gay associates at a coffee-house in London. He was the wit of the company, and at one of their meetings, when Wesley was to preach in the neighbourhood, his companions sent him to hear the itinerant apostle, in order to give them a mimicked specimen of his preaching. Just as he entered the place of worship Wesley announced his text, "*Prepare to meet thy God!*" It struck the young man's conscience; he listened with emotion to the sermon, and thenceforward the career of his life was changed. On returning as a necessary courtesy to his company at the coffee-house, they asked him if he had "taken off the old Methodist?" "No, gentlemen," was his reply, "but he has taken me off," and he retired from their circle to return no more.

Lady Huntingdon was personally intimate with his mother, and the young convert found in the friend of his parent a religious guide: he became a faithful attendant at the devotional meetings which were held continually at the house of the Countess. The possessor of an opulent fortune, he had no pecuniary motive to seek a lucrative position in the Church; and being a superior scholar, he had little need of preliminary training for the pulpit. He quickly owned his Methodistic principles, and sought ordination, not, however, without some obstructions, though his brother was a bishop. He delivered his first sermon at Allhallows, London, to a large assembly, attracted mostly by the novelty of the fact that a lawyer had turned preacher. But his power as a pulpit orator was immediately revealed, and thenceforward could not fail to secure him crowds of hearers. Tall and commanding in stature, majestic in countenance, unusually dignified and graceful in manner, and, above all, profoundly impressed himself with the truth he delivered, his audience was struck with surprise, and his entrance upon the sacred office was "hailed with the acclaims of the friends of religion, who heard the doctrines of the Reformation nobly defended by an able advocate, whose knowledge was equal to his zeal."* Wesley had scarcely made a more notable

* Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, chap. 10.

convert, and had never given to his Calvinistic brethren a more important trophy. Such was Rev. Martin Madan. During the present decade of our narrative he was prominent in the Methodistic movement. He traversed much of the country with Romaine, Venn, Lady Huntingdon, and Wesley, proclaiming the truth with great effect. He continued to labour as an evangelist, and as chaplain to the celebrated Lock Hospital, till the publication of his "Thelypthora; or, Treatise on Female Ruin," a work of benevolent intention but of fallacious theories, which greatly diminished his usefulness.

Rev. Henry Venn was curate of Clapham, and served three lectureships in the metropolis. He heard Whitefield often in both places, and his intimacy with Bryan Broughton, one of the original Methodists at Oxford and a coadjutor and correspondent of Wesley and Whitefield, led him to sympathize with the great revival which Methodism was extending over the land. He accompanied Whitefield and Madan on an itinerant excursion into Gloucestershire, and was thus initiated into those "novel" methods of ministerial labour which distinguished his new friends, and which he pursued, as he found opportunity, the remainder of his useful life. Whitefield, in a letter to Lady Huntingdon, describes him as "valiant for the truth, a son of thunder; he labours abundantly, and his sincerity has been owned of the Lord in the conversion of sinners. Thanks be to God for such an instrument as this to strengthen our hands!" During more than thirty years he co-operated zealously with Whitefield, the Wesleys, and Howell Harris in many parts of England and Wales. He adhered stedfastly to the Church after the necessary secession of Lady Huntingdon's societies, but continued the "irregularities" of his labours, preaching in private houses, barns, and sometimes in the open air, till the disabilities of age compelled him to retire.* Like Berridge and Grimshaw, he made his parish at Huddersfield, the head-quarters of extensive labours in all the neighbouring region. No less than thirteen young men, who had been converted by his instrumentality, entered the ministry, chiefly in Independent churches. Besides his regular Sabbath services, he usually preached eight or ten sermons each week in remote parts

* See page 125. The attempt of Venn's biographers (his son and grandson) to clear him from the noble reproach of Methodism is too futile to need remark. The reader will find it answered in Lady Huntingdon's Life and Times, chap. 17, and Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 18. The motive of his biographers was as reprehensible as their attempt was unsuccessful. Venn corresponded through thirty years with Lady Huntingdon, but not one of the letters is inserted in his Memoir.

of his parish, and many of them were delivered in the open air. He found, he says, his "out-door preaching much owned of the Lord."* He was the correspondent as well as the co-labourer of the Wesleys, and his name continually recurs on the pages of their journals during these times. In the theological world he is noted as the author of "The Complete Duty of Man," an able attempt to correct the defects of the more famous "Whole Duty of Man."

Thus did an illustrious constellation of Churchmen—Fletcher, Grimshaw, Berridge, Thompson, Romaine, Madan, Venn, and others—gather around the elder lights of Methodism in this memorable decade of its history. They reflected much lustre upon, but borrowed more from it; and they owe their chief importance in ecclesiastical history to the fact that they were Methodists as well as Churchmen.

We have contemplated the Methodistic movement thus far as advancing chiefly in two separate though nearly parallel lines—Arminian and Calvinistic. We have had occasional glimpses, however, of a third development of the great revival, one which reached a crisis, worthy of particular attention, towards the end of this period. Both the Arminian and the Calvinistic Methodist bodies suffered no little inconvenience from the English excesses of Moravianism, after the separation of Wesley and Lady Huntingdon from it in London. The most difficult cases of discipline in their respective communities came from this source. These excesses were temporary, however, and no desirable purpose could be promoted by a record of them in our pages. Ingham, one of the Oxford Methodists, and the companion of Wesley in Georgia, was impressed like Wesley himself, on the sea and at Savannah, by the simplicity and moral beauty of the Moravian religious life. On their return to England he accompanied Wesley to Herrnhut, and so strong became his sympathies with these excellent people that he could not sacrifice his attachment to them when the Methodists revolted from the disorders of the Fetter Lane society. He went into Yorkshire, and with incredible itinerant labours, assisted by Moravian companions, he founded there what may be called a Moravian form of Methodism. Preaching stations were established throughout the county and in neighbouring shires. At Birstal he took Nelson publicly by the hand, and gave him liberty to speak in all his chapels. The Wesleys, Whitefield, Madan, and Romaine often preached for his societies, and they seem to have been generally recognized by the Methodistic

* Letter to the Countess of Huntingdon. Life and Times, etc., chap. 17.

leaders as a legitimate branch of the great revival, notwithstanding Wesley's people in Yorkshire experienced many vexations from the eccentricities of individual preachers, who retained some of the London Moravian follies. The student of the contemporary Methodist documents is surprised at the frequent allusions made to these "Inghamite societies," and their numerical and moral importance. They multiplied till no less than eighty-four were reported. John Cennick joined them, after leaving successively Wesley and Whitefield. Grimshaw delighted to mount his itinerant steed and scour the country among them, for his great soul could never pause to consider merely geographical or ecclesiastical distinctions. Their preachers often accompanied Wesley in his travels in that part of the kingdom; two of them, Batty and Colbeck, stood with him, like good soldiers of the Lord Jesus, in the fiery fight of affliction which he and Grimshaw encountered from the Colne mob at Roughlee, and Grimshaw and Ingham had a severe conflict previously with the same rabble.

Count Zinzendorf and his son-in-law, Bishop Johannes de Watteville, visited them, and assisted in the organization of their discipline. On the accession of a new member he was presented with a ticket, by which he had admission to all their services, consisting of public meetings, choir meetings of men and choir meetings of women, and many other peculiar occasions. They had circuits for preaching, which comprised Yorkshire, Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Lincolnshire, with portions of Cheshire and Derbyshire. Ingham was admitted to Wesley's Conference in Leeds, but the precise relation of his societies to the Wesleyan body was never defined. He had his own conferences also, and at one of them was elected a *general overseer*, or bishop. Lady Huntingdon, who could not approve all the disciplinary features of his societies, attempted to promote a union of them with Wesley, and she sent Whitefield to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, to meet the Wesleys for consultation on the subject. Charles assented, but John declined the overture. He was sagacious enough to perceive its dangerous liabilities, for he knew well the incoherent elements of the mongrel association, and the impossibility of subordinating them to the strict regimen which he had been able to establish among his own people, and by which alone these reclaimed multitudes could be kept together. Events soon confirmed his wise judgment.

In 1759 Ingham read "Sandeman's Letters on Theron and Aspasio," and "Glas's Testimony of the King of Martyrs." These works produced such an impression on his mind that he

deputed two of his preachers to Scotland to learn more fully the views of their authors. At Edinburgh they met Sandeman, and Glas at Dundee. They returned converts to the Sandemanian principles, and immediately spread discontent and disputes among the societies. Ingham's authority could not control the partisan violence which soon broke out. He called in the assistance of his friends. The Countess of Huntingdon wrote them letters. Whitefield felt deeply for them, "wept and prayed," and used his influence to save them. Romaine hastened into Yorkshire, but could not restrain them. Ingham attempted to excommunicate the disturbers, but it was an endless task. The whole order was wrecked and sunk. Thirteen societies only remained from more than eighty which had flourished with all the evidences of permanent prosperity.*

Discipline and authority, such as Wesley alone among the Methodist founders seemed capable of establishing, were necessary to any enduring organization of the various and crude elements which Methodism gathered from the degraded masses of the English populace. The Countess of Huntingdon resembled him most in capacity for government. She attempted, as we shall hereafter see, to give an organized unity to the Calvinistic Methodists, but her effort was too late to prevent the threefold division which at last took place among them, and their consequent declension.

The fate of Ingham's societies is one of the best vindications of Wesley's wisdom as an ecclesiastical legislator. The dispersion of these societies, however, left some good results. Many of them were merged in the Wesleyan or Dissenting bodies, especially in the class of Scotch Presbyterians called Daleites. Many of their preachers remained useful men, and the disaster was much relieved by the consideration that Wesleyan Methodism took general possession of Yorkshire, and that two Methodistic orders were hardly necessary at the time of Ingham's failure.

Ingham left the Moravians through Lady Huntingdon's influence. He sank into temporary despondence after the breaking up of his societies. He deemed their overthrow a divine judgment upon himself, and seemed inconsolable for some time, but recovered his tranquillity at last. His wife, Lady Margaret Hastings, sister-in-law of the Countess of Huntingdon, and the

* Sandemanianism was afterwards introduced into New England, but failed by its own distractions. Sandeman died in Danbury, Connecticut. His tomb is still preserved there, and slight traces of Sandemanianism linger in the vicinity.

instrument of introducing the latter to the Methodists, rapidly declined in health soon after these events, but her afflicted husband was comforted by the moral beauty with which the sun of her life went down. "Thanks be to God," she exclaimed in her agony, "Thanks be to God, the moment has come, the day is dawning!" and died. "When she had no longer strength to speak to me," wrote Ingham, "she looked most sweetly at me and smiled. On the Tuesday before she died, when she had opened her heart to me and declared the ground of her hope, her eyes sparkled with divine joy, her countenance shone, her cheeks were ruddy; I never saw her look so sweet and lovely in my life. All about her were affected; no one could refrain from tears, and yet it was a delight to be with her."* She occupies a conspicuous place among the "elect ladies" of early Methodism.

Four years later Ingham followed her into the rest that remaineth for the people of God. He is reported to have been in person uncommonly handsome—"too handsome for a man"—a gentleman in manners, a saint in temper, and an apostle in labours. He contributed greatly to the Methodistic revival, and, notwithstanding some errors, deserves an honourable record in its annals.

CHAPTER IV.

DEVELOPMENT OF OPINIONS AND ECONOMY BY THE CONFERENCES: 1750—1760.

Deficient Records of the Conferences—Salary of the Preachers—Prominent Members at the Session of 1753—Separation of Prominent Preachers—Tendency to Dissent—The Perronets—Charles Wesley's High Church Prejudices—Critical Importance of the Session of 1755—Question of Separation from the National Church—Charles Wesley's hasty Conduct—Was Dissent expedient at this Time?—Wesley writes his "Twelve Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England"—Wesley as a Reformer—His Opinion of John Knox—Historical Importance of his Conservatism—His Ecclesiastical Opinions at this time—Subsequent Sessions—Conference Examination of Character introduced.

CONFERENCES were held annually, and oftener during the present period, but no authentic Minutes remain of any sessions except two, and of these our accounts are very meagre.

* The pious Romaine wrote to a friend: "I got a good advancement by the death of Lady Margaret, and was led into a sweet path of meditation, in which I went on contemplating till my heart burned within me. . . . Many a time my spirit has been refreshed with hearing her relate simply and feelingly how Jesus was her life."

To the session of 1750 allusion has already been made. Respecting that of 1751, held at Bristol, Wesley expressed much anxiety; many of his preachers were tired of his forbearance with the national clergy, and of the dependence of the Methodist societies upon them for the sacraments, and some of both preachers and societies were eager for open Dissent. He also suspected, though erroneously, other grievances. He says, "My spirit was much bowed down among them, fearing some of them were perverted from the simplicity of the gospel; but I was revived by the sight of John Haime and John Nelson, knowing they held the truth as it is in Jesus, and did not hold it in unrighteousness. The more we conversed the more brotherly love increased. I expected to have heard many objections to our first doctrines, but none appeared to have any; we seemed to be all of one mind, as well as one heart."* He held a second Conference the same year at Leeds; thirty preachers were present; he particularly inquired "concerning their grace, gifts, and fruits, and found reason to doubt of one only."

At the Conference of 1752 an attempt was made to provide better support for the preachers. Hitherto their only pecuniary claim was for the payment of their travelling expenses by the Stewards of Circuits; their board was gratuitously given by members of the societies as they passed along from town to town; any other assistance was in the form of donations, and was scarcely enough to provide them with clothing and books. It was now ordained that each preacher should be supplied with twelve pounds per annum. For many years, however, this meagre allowance was seldom provided, and the self-denying itinerants had to be content with what partial payments their brethren could make.

We have a list of the members present at the tenth Conference, held May 22nd, 1753, at Leeds. Grimshaw, Hopper, Shent, Walsh, Nelson, Hampson, Edward Perronet, John Haime, with many others, attended. Twelve local preachers and four laymen were also recognized as members. At this session it was resolved that the Conference should thereafter sit successively at London, Bristol, and Leeds. Some suggestions were adopted respecting the best modes of suppressing discords in the societies, which were occasioned by Moravian and Calvinistic influences.† The eleventh session was held in London, May 22nd, 1754. Wesley says: "The spirit of peace and love was in the midst of us. Before we parted we all willingly signed an agreement not

* Journal, anno 1751. † Smith's History of Methodism, book ii. chap. 3.

to act independently of each other, so that the breach lately made has only united us more closely than ever." Five able preachers, Jonathan Reeves, John Edwards, Samuel Larwood, Charles Skelton, and John Whitforth, had retired from the itinerancy. The lack of pecuniary support for their families seems to have been the chief motive for their secession. Reeves became a useful minister of the Established Church; the others were settled as independent pastors. The written pledge mentioned by Wesley seems to have been designed as a guard against any future liability of the kind.

The ensuing year was attended by new difficulties. Some of the ablest of the lay preachers were disposed to concede the reasonable demand of the people for the sacraments from their own pastors. In many cases the national clergy, upon whom the societies were dependent for these means of grace, were flagitiously immoral; they had been often found at the head of mobs attacking the Methodists who were to receive the Eucharist from their hands the next Sabbath. In not a few instances the Methodists were denied the right of communion. Wesley himself had been repelled from the sacramental altar by the drunken curate of Epworth; his brother had been treated in like manner in Wales; his adherents were so treated in Bristol, Leeds, and parts of Derbyshire. Neither the good temper nor the good sense of his people could require them to submit to this privation and such outrages. Joseph Cownley, whom Wesley considered one of the best preachers in England, demanded for himself and his brethren the right, as legitimate ministers of the gospel, to supply their persecuted people with the sacraments; Thomas Walsh, and Edward and Charles Perronet, joined them in this demand, and actually began to administer them.* Charles Wesley, whose mind, less noble than his heart, was perpetually fettered by his High Church sentiments, became alarmed. His influence over his brother on any disputed question was feeble, and deservedly so, for on ecclesiastical questions especially he seemed incapable of progress, only because, through his strong prejudices, he was incapable of logic. He endeavoured to influence his brother by correspondence with his friends. Walter Sellon, who had been a Methodist itinerant, but was now a curate

* Edward Perronet afterwards ceased to travel, through his opposition to Wesley's adherence to the Church. He settled at Canterbury as a Dissenting pastor, and wrote a severe satire against the Establishment, entitled *The Mitre*. Charles Perronet continued in the itinerancy till 1776, when he died at his post.

in Leicestershire, and retained much influence with Wesley, was employed by Charles to defeat the new tendencies.* Charles also meanwhile remonstrated with his brother. He knew that John had declared his belief in the equality of presbyters and bishops, and suspected that he had, as a presbyter, secretly ordained some of the malcontent preachers.

As the Conference of 1755 approached much anxiety was felt for the decision which might be reached on the question. It was likely to be an important crisis in the history of Methodism, and the correspondence between Charles Wesley and Sellon became eager. The latter was to attend the Conference and plead for "the Church;" Grimshaw was to be present only to take leave of them if they took leave of the Church. The session began on the 6th of May, 1755, at Leeds. Its prospective importance brought together no less than sixty-three preachers, the largest number that had yet assembled at any Conference. The main question proposed for discussion was whether they ought to separate from the Establishment. It was debated through three days. John Wesley records the result; whatever was advanced, he says, on the one side or the other, was seriously and calmly considered; and on the third day they were all fully agreed in the general conclusion that, whether it was lawful or not, it was no way expedient to separate from the Church.† Walsh and his associates consented, for the sake of peace, to cease to administer the sacraments. John Wesley said that when he reflected on their answer he admired their spirit and was ashamed of his own. He acknowledged that though he "did not fluctuate, yet he could not answer the arguments" on their side of the question; but his brother seemed incapable of understanding his liberality. "I have no fear about this matter," wrote John; "I only fear the preachers' or the people's leaving, not the Church, but the love of God and inward or outward holiness. To this I press them forward continually. I dare not in conscience spend my time and strength on externals. If, as my lady says, all outward establishments are Babel, so is this establishment. Let it stand, for me; I neither set it up nor pull it down. But let you and I build up the city of God."

In another letter, alluding to the excommunication of a clergyman by the Bishop of London for preaching "without license," he wrote: "It is probable the point will now be determined concerning the Church, for if we must either *dissent or be silent, actuam est.* We have no time to trifle." "Church or

* Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 19. † Wesley's Journal, anno 1755.

no Church," he again wrote, "we must attend to the work of saving souls."* This was as generously as it was bravely said; and especially does it appear so when we consider the coolness of his temper and the tenacity of his attachment to the Church.

Though Charles Wesley had secured his main design, he perceived that it was a concession made by the Christian spirit of the discontented preachers. Their manly good sense had not yielded to new convictions respecting the right they claimed. Some of them were as able men as the pulpits of England could present. They and their people had borne long and patiently the maltreatment of the Established clergy; they could make out an unanswerable argument from the best ecclesiastical authorities of the Anglican Church for their new claim; they proved both their good sense and good temper by suspending it for the sake of peace; but Charles Wesley saw clearly enough that it was only suspended, that such men could not always be treated as children, and unwilling, if not incapable, through his obstinate "Churchmanship," of sharing their generous spirit of concession, he had no sooner secured his purpose than he retired from the Conference and left the town without taking leave of even his brother. "I took French leave this morning," he wrote to his family: "the wound is healed—*slightly*." And at a subsequent date he declareed himself "done with Conferences for ever," a rash assertion, which he afterwards practically recalled. The pertinacity and precipitancy of his conduct in this whole affair is in unfortunate contrast with the charitable and considerate course of the lay preachers. Methodism owes inestimable obligations to Charles Wesley for the unrivalled Psalmody which he gave it, and for his eloquence, his travels, and his sufferings in its behalf. His ecclesiasticism, however, continually retarded its development, and had he ultimately prevailed he would have defeated one of the most momentous measures in its history—its American organization. While the moderation of the lay preachers cannot fail to command our admiration, its expediency is not unquestionable. Had Methodism taken a more independent stand at this early period, when it had so many intolerable provocations from the Establishment, and the popular mind so little ground of sympathy with the clergy, it is the opinion of not a few wise men that it might before this time have largely superseded the Anglican hierarchy, and done much more than it has for the dissolution of the connection of the Church and State. The measure demanded by its lay ministry at this Conference,

* Smith's History, etc., book ii. chap. 2.

and by many of its societies, it was compelled subsequently to adopt, but at so late a date, and with such precautions, that it has ever since, wisely or unwisely, maintained an ambiguous relation towards both Churchmen and Dissenters.

The thirteenth annual Conference was held at Bristol, August 26th, 1756. Fifty preachers were present, including Charles Wesley, notwithstanding his precipitate retirement from the preceding session and his equally hasty resolution to attend no more. The propriety of adhering to the Church, and of treating "the clergy with tenderness," was again considered. God gave us all to be of one mind, says Wesley. The Rules of the Society, of the Bands, and of Kingswood school, were examined and confirmed, and the Conference was adjourned with a declaration from both the Wesleys of their purpose never to separate from the Church.

To confirm this conclusion Wesley wrote at this time his "Twelve Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England," though they were not published till 1758. They are a remarkable example of his terse style, his precise habit of thinking, and his large charity. He dreaded the controversies which a separation would occasion, and his consequent diversion from his better work; the offence it would give to many devout minds; the scorn it would provoke among gainsayers; the difficulties of constructing an independent Church, and the internal discords, experiments, and excesses it might induce among his own people and preachers. Moving, as Wesley did, amid mobs and tumults, no man in public life ever maintained more self-recollection or a finer sense of order. He abhorred disputation, and even controversy. He contemned the vulgar idea that rudeness is essential to energy, or an anarchical spirit to the heroism of great reformers.* He repressed with calm but prompt determination any appearance of such a spirit among his associates. When, in Scotland, viewing the ruins of Aberbrotheck, "God deliver us," he exclaimed, "from reforming mobs." He acknowledged the usefulness of John Knox, but reprobated his spirit. "I know," he wrote, "it is commonly said the work to be done needed such a spirit. Not so; the work of God does not, cannot *need* the

* One of his critics, Isaac Taylor, has rightly estimated him in this respect at least. "It is a fact worthy of all regard, that when Heaven sends its own chosen men to bring about needed reformations at the cost of a momentary anarchy, it does not give any such commission as this to those who by temper are anarchists. . . . The Wesleys present a notable illustration of this principle. Great innovators indeed they were, but anarchists they were not." Wesley and Methodism.

work of the devil to forward it. And a calm even spirit goes through rough work better than a furious one. Although, therefore, God did use, at the time of the Reformation, some overbearing, passionate men, yet He did not use them *because* they were such, but *notwithstanding* they were so. And there is no doubt He would have used them much more had they been of a humbler, milder spirit."

If his temper in this respect led to too much moderation in the present instance, it was, nevertheless, of great importance to the future course of Methodism; it infused into the system that spirit of conservatism which, without neutralizing its force, has preserved it from the peril of those incongruous elements which it has necessarily gathered under its extended sway. The proverbial conservatism of Methodism, notwithstanding its equally proverbial energy, has been owing almost as much to the impression which Wesley's personal character has left upon its ministry, as to the discipline which he gave it. His fidelity to the Church is the more striking, as it was not at this date the result of any ecclesiastical opinion, but of that expediency which with him was always a moral law. He had been convinced, as we have seen, that the recognized distinction between the orders of bishops and presbyters was a fallacy, that the apostolic succession was a "fable," and the doctrine that "none but episcopal ordination was valid" was "an entire mistake," as proved by Bishop Stillingfleet.* Admirable then, even if mistaken, was the caution with which he avoided every violent measure not forced upon him by absolute necessity, and the unswerving self-control by which he controlled all around him.

The fourteenth session was held on August 4th, 1757. We have no trace of its Minutes. Of the fifteenth session, held at Bristol on August 10th, 1758, we have but a single sentence: "It began and ended in perfect harmony." The sixteenth, held in London on August 8th, 1759, was equally harmonious. We have no intimation of its proceedings, except that the time was almost entirely employed in the personal examination of the characters of the preachers, a usage which has ever since been annually maintained in Methodist Conferences throughout the world. The seventeenth session was held at Bristol, August 29th, 1760. Wesley arrived late in the week from Ireland, and the deliberations

* A Letter to a Friend. "I firmly believe I am a Scriptural *episcopos*, as much as any man in England, or in Europe. For the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove."

continued but two days. "The love and unanimity" of its members, he says, "was such as soon made me forget all my labours." Such is its brief, its only record.

CHAPTER V.

ARMINIAN METHODISM FROM 1760 TO 1770.

Great Revivals—The Doctrine of Sanctification—Writers on the Subject—Disturbance in the London Society—George Bell's Delusions—Thomas Maxfield's Separation from Wesley—Fanaticism respecting the End of the World—George Story—Fate of Bell and Maxfield—Wesley itinerating—His large Congregations in England and Ireland—He visits Scotland—Christopher Hopper—Cudworth's Letters of Hervey—Thomas Taylor—Sketch of his Life—His Adventures in Scotland—Duncan Wright among the Highlanders—Dissent among Wesley's Societies—Death of Grimshaw—Death of Coates, the oldest Lay Preacher of the Connection—Wesley and Warburton—Fletcher at Madeley—His Persecutions—His Liberality—His Pastoral Habits—His Preaching—His Piety—Wesley at Madeley—Condition of Methodism in 1770—It is introduced into America—Barbara Heck—Philip Embury—Wesley's Regard for Military Men—Captain Webb.

THE year 1760 was signalized by a more extraordinary religious interest than had hitherto prevailed among the Methodist societies. "Here began," says Wesley, "that glorious work of sanctification which had been nearly at a stand for twenty years. From time to time it spread, first through various parts of Yorkshire, afterwards in London, then through most parts of England, next to Dublin, Limerick, and through all the south and west of Ireland. And wherever the work of sanctification increased, the whole work of God increased in all its branches."* It continued to advance with deepening effect for several years. In 1762 he remarks that his brother had, some years before, said to him that the day of the Methodist Pentecost had not fully come; but he doubted not it would, and that then they should hear of persons sanctified as frequently as they had thus far heard of them justified. "It was now fully come," adds Wesley. His Journal for successive years records the spread of this higher Christian experience, and its salutary effects on all the interests of his societies. Wherever he went he preached on the subject as particularly appropriate to the present development of the Methodistic

* Myles's Chronological History of the Methodists, p. 72.

movement. In March, 1761, he called many of his preachers together at Leeds, and inquired into the state of the societies in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire; they were pervaded by the new interest. He found, he writes, the work of God increased on every side, particularly in Lincolnshire, where there had been no such interest since he had preached at Epworth on his father's tomb.* At Manchester he exhorted the societies to "go on unto perfection," and a flame was kindled which he trusted neither "men nor devils would ever be able to quench." In London all the societies were revived; "many believers entered into such a rest as it was not in their hearts before to conceive;" the congregations were increased, and while Christians sought a more entire consecration, the godless were awakened more numerously than ever. At Bristol he made the same record; the society was larger than it had been for many years. "God was pleased to pour out His Spirit this year," he writes, "on every part of England and Ireland, perhaps in a manner we had never seen; certainly not for twenty years." At Liverpool prevailed such a religious excitement as had never been known there before.† In 1762 he ascertained that there were about four hundred witnesses of sanctification in the London Societies, and on his visit to Ireland the same year he found the classes almost everywhere quickened with the same aspirations after holiness. Such times were never before in Limerick, wrote one of his Irish correspondents; "the fire which broke out before you left us is now spreading on every side. Blessed be God, his Word runs swiftly."‡ Wesley records his opinion that this great revival was more remarkable in Dublin than even in London, far greater in proportion to the members in the societies, and more exempt from objectionable features; none there were headstrong or unadvisable; none were wiser than their teachers; none dreamed of being infallible or above temptation; none were whimsical or enthusiastic; "all were calm and sober-minded." At the close of the year 1763 he says: "Here I stood and looked back on the late occurrences. Before Thomas Walsh left England God began that great work which has continued ever since without any considerable intermission. During the whole time many have been convinced of sin, many justified, and many backsliders healed. But the peculiar work of the season has been what St. Paul calls *the perfecting of the saints*." Many persons, he adds, in London, in Bristol, in Yorkshire, and in various parts both of

* Journal, anno 1761. † Journal, August, 1762.
‡ Ibid, July.

England and Ireland, experienced so deep and universal a change as it had not entered into their hearts to anticipate. After a deep conviction of inbred sin, they had been so filled with faith and love that sin vanished, and they found from that time no pride, anger, or unbelief. They could rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks. "Now," he continued, "whether we call this the destruction or suspension of sin, it is a glorious work of God; such a work as, considering both the depth and extent of it, we never saw in these kingdoms before."

Some, he admits, had lost the blessing; a few, "very few compared to the whole number," had given way to enthusiasm and separated from their brethren; but though these errors formed a serious stumbling-block, yet the work went on, "nor has it," he says, "ceased to this day in any of its branches. God still convinces, justifies, sanctifies. We have lost only the dross, the enthusiasm, the offence. The pure gold remains, faith working by love, and we have reason to believe increases daily." And as late as 1768 he writes to a friend, blessing God that if a hundred enthusiasts were set aside, they were still encompassed with a cloud of witnesses who have testified, and do testify in life and in death, the Perfection he had taught for forty years.*

It was indeed remarked that the professors of sanctification were generally, as at Dublin, distinguished more than other Methodists as "calm and sober-minded." Quietness without "quietism" became a characteristic of them as a class, and, among preachers and people, they were considered by Wesley to be his most prudent, most reliable coadjutors. During forty years he had been preaching, as he says, this doctrine of Christian Perfection, and throughout that period many exemplary witnesses of it had lived and died in his societies. While at Oxford, as we have seen, he became convinced that the Mystic writers, with all their errors, had apprehended a great truth of Christianity in this tenet. The sketch of a perfect Christian by Clemens Alexandrinus had excited his ardent aspirations. Bishop Taylor had irradiated that ideal of a religious character by his rare eloquence. William Law had written ably upon it. Thomas à Kempis and other Catholic saints had taught and exemplified it. Fenelon had been an illustrious example of it in both his writings and life. Wesley translated the life of Fenelon's friend, Madam Guyon, and gave it to his people as a practical demonstration of the great truth. He also published in his Christian Library the essay of Dr. Lucas on

* Journal, August, 1768.

Religious Perfection,* as presenting generally the Scriptural view of the subject. The Scriptural phrases "Sanctification," "Perfection," "Perfect Love," would, independently of these authorities, have suggested to him a pre-eminent standard of spiritual life, but these writers had given a specific and even technical character to the words. Their opinions, glowing with the very sanctity of the Gospel, and aspiring to what most men deemed an altogether preterhuman virtue, have been rendered familiar to the Methodist itinerants throughout England, and later throughout the world, in the writings of Law, Fletcher, and Wesley. Every one of them, at his reception into the travelling ministry, avows his belief in the doctrine, and that he is "groaning after," if he has not already attained, this exalted grace. Perhaps no single fact affords a better explanation of the marvellous success of Methodism. Wesley observed and declared that wherever it was preached revivals usually prevailed. "It is," he said, "the grand depositum which God has given to the people called Methodists, and chiefly to propagate this, it appears, God raised them up. Their mission was not to form a religious party, but to spread holiness over these lands." The doctrine of personal sanctification was, in fine, the great potential idea of Methodism. It not only gave it life and energy, by inspiring its congregations with devout and transforming aspirations, but it was the precise sentiment needed as the basis of its ministry. Nothing short of entire self-sacrifice could consist with the duties and privations of that ministry; and according to their doctrine of Perfection, entire consecration was the preliminary of entire sanctification. These holy men, then, in making an entire public sacrifice of themselves, did so as a part of an entire consecration to God, for the purpose of their own entire personal sanctification, as well as their usefulness to others. What ideal of ministerial character and devotion could be more sublime or more effective? And this ideal they realized in the exceeding labours and purity of their lives, and the martyr-like triumphs of their deaths.

Wesley defined this Scriptural truth more clearly than any other modern author. Evangelical theologians cannot deny his definition of the doctrine. They can dissent from him only in respect to the time in which entire sanctification may be practically reached by the believer. All admit it as at least an ideal, yet Scriptural standard of spiritual life, to be habitually aspired to by good men, though attained, with rare exceptions, only at

* The third part of "An Inquiry after Happiness," by Dr. Lucas, prebend of Westminster.

death. Wesley claimed it as, like justification, an attainment of faith, and practicable at any moment.*

The "enthusiasm" to which Wesley alludes as having marred this special revival, was mostly limited to London, where George Bell, a life-guardsman and an honest madman, had become one of his local preachers. Bell supposed he had effected a miraculous cure; he attempted another on a blind man, but pronounced in vain the *Ephphatha*. His failure in the last case did not correct his delusion respecting the first. It arose, he argued, from the patient's want of faith. His language became fanatical in public meetings. He asserted that his "perfection" rendered him infallible, above temptation, and superior to the instructions of all persons who were not perfect, and to the rules of the Bands and of the United Society.† Wesley admonished him, and visited London repeatedly to restrain him. His forbearance shows the kindness of his heart, but was injudicious.

Fanaticism is always infectious. In this instance it spread rapidly, and Wesley was surprised to learn that Thomas Maxfield was allied with the enthusiasts. Maxfield had been converted under his preaching at his first visit to Bristol. He ranked as his earliest lay preacher, and Wesley had promoted his welfare in all possible respects. He introduced him, in London, to a social position above his birth, by which he had secured an advantageous marriage; and obtained ordination for him in Ireland from the Bishop of Londonderry, who favoured Wesley's labours in that country, and who, in laying hands on Maxfield, said: "Sir, I ordain you to assist that good man, that he may not work himself to death." Maxfield was not naturally an enthusiast, and how far he shared the fanaticism of Bell and his associates it is difficult

* Alexander Knox, Esq., the friend and correspondent of Bishop Jebb, says (Thirty Years' Correspondence with Bishop Jebb, Letter XIX.), "Nay, the very point you aim at in them, I mean their view of Christian Perfection, is in my mind so essentially right and important, that it is on this account particularly I value them above other denominations of the sort. I am aware that ignorant individuals expose what is in itself true by their unfounded pretensions and irrational descriptions; but with the sincerest disapproval of every such excess, I do esteem John Wesley's stand for holiness to be that which does immortal honour to his name. . . . . In John Wesley's views of Christian Perfection are combined, in substance, all the sublime morality of the Greek fathers, the spirituality of the Mystics, and the divine philosophy of our favourite Platonists. Macarius, Fenelon, Lucas, and all of their respective classes, have been consulted and digested by him, and his ideas are essentially theirs." See also Knox's Essay on Wesley's Character, addressed to Southey. Appendix to Southey's Wesley.

† Wesley's Journal, February, March, and April, 1763.

to ascertain. He seems to have been, perhaps unconsciously, inclined to side with them more from discontent with Wesley's authority, than from any sympathy with their errors. Being now an ordained clergyman, well married, and with good resources, it was natural that he should dislike his subordinate position and wish an independent one. Whatever was his motive, he took side with the enthusiasts and really became their head, though Bell continued to furnish by his ravings the chief stimulus of their extravagances.

Wesley was compelled at last to expel the latter, and to disclaim, in the provincial newspapers, a prophecy which he had spread, that the world would end on a given day. A great panic arose from this prediction. The news of it extended into the interior, injuring the reputation of the Methodists, till Wesley's disclaimer could follow and counteract it. George Story, one of Wesley's best itinerants, reached Darlington on the predicted day, and found many of the people terrified, and others indignant and threatening to tear down the preaching-house and kill the first preacher who should appear in the neighbourhood. Story was a dispassionate man, and telling the mistress of the house that if she would venture the building he would venture himself, he confronted the mob with the newspaper containing Wesley's advertisement in his hand. He could not otherwise have prevailed over the uproar and delivered his sermon.

In London, meanwhile, the terror of the people was too great for the logic of even Wesley, though he endeavoured day and night to dispel the delusion. Scores of members withdrew from the societies, giving up their tickets. "Blind John," they exclaimed, "is incapable of teaching us; we will keep to Mr. Maxfield." On the dreaded day Wesley preached against the prophecy, but many, he says, were afraid to go to bed. Some betook themselves to prayer-meetings which were continued through the night; and others went out into the fields, believing that if the world was not destroyed, London at least would be by an earthquake.

The failure of the prediction did not wholly disconcert Bell's party, for insanity in the form of fanaticism has a subtle shrewdness at sophistry. Prayers might have prevailed to avert the threatened doom, or it might have been postponed for some new reasons; or the prophecy might have been designed as a trial of the faith of believers, like the demand for the sacrifice of Isaac. In the course of time, Bell lost his religious ardour. From being a fanatic, he became a sceptic; he turned politician, was rampant for ultral opinions, and died at an extreme age a "radical reformer."

Maxfield gathered round him the alienated members of the London Society, and opened an independent chapel in Moorfields, where he continued to labour for about twenty years. He became Calvinistic in his opinions, and published a severe pamphlet against Wesley. Some of the Methodists who seceded with him continued with him to the last, but most of them returned.* Wesley treated him throughout this disturbance with extreme forbearance, and when he chose the alternative of preaching for the followers of Bell, rather than for the Methodists at the Foundry, went thither himself from Westminster, and preached with deep affliction from the text, "*If I am bereaved of my children I am bereaved.*"

If Wesley's treatment of these disturbances was at first too indulgent, his final course was characteristically decisive, and soon extinguished the evil. He then went forth traversing the land, and found the societies flourishing, the revival extending into many new places, and his congregations larger than ever before. In some towns even his five o'clock morning assemblies were so great that he had to leave the chapels for the open air. The Birstal Hill was thronged with twenty thousand hearers. At Leeds his out-door assembly was almost as large, and surpassed all preceding congregations there. At Newcastle, he says, he knew not that he had ever preached to three such congregations in one day as met him at the outside of Pandon Gate; he was obliged to speak to the utmost reach of his voice from the first to the last word. On Calton Hill, at Edinburgh, he addressed the largest throng he had ever seen in the kingdom, and the most deeply affected. Throughout Cornwall the interest of preceding years was unabated. His congregations, in some instances, were too large to be able to hear him, and in his favourite amphitheatre at Gwennap he preached to thousands, whom he supposed no human voice could reach on any level ground.

In Ireland he was greeted with similar encouragements. At Cork many of the chief of the citizens, clergy as well as laity, were present at his street preaching. "What a change," he writes; "formerly we could not walk through these streets but at the peril of our lives." At Kilfillan nearly all the town, Irish, English, Germans, Protestants, and Papists, gathered around him in the market-place, and many followed him to his lodgings, where he continued to pray with and exhort them till bedtime; and the next day, as early as four o'clock, the "town seemed all alive," and audible sobs and ejaculations were heard from "old and young, on the

* Coke and Moore's Life of Wesley, ii. 4.

right hand and on the left." At Limerick he addressed, "amid a solemn awe," the largest congregation he had ever seen there; and in Dublin he preached, in Barrack Square, to "such a congregation as he never saw in Dublin before." "What a change," he adds, "since Mr. Whitefield a few years ago attempted to preach near this place!"

He visited Scotland several times during this period, with better success than in former years, but with none comparable to that which attended him in other parts of the realm.

Christopher Hopper had not laboured in vain in Edinburgh. "Many poor sinners," says this noted lay preacher, "were converted to God," and a society was formed. He extended his labours to Dundee, Musselburgh, Leith, Aberdeen, and other places, and when Wesley arrived he saw a better prospect for Methodism in the north than at any earlier period.* In 1764 the society at Aberdeen was able to lay the foundation of its first chapel, "the Octagon," as the preaching-houses were then called from their peculiar architecture. The next year a similar building arose at Edinburgh. A Scotch edition of Cudworth's Letters of Hervey was extensively circulated, and damaged the influence of Methodism seriously. The devoted lay preachers, attending to their one work, and indisposed to waste their time in polemics, were met at all points and deeply afflicted by the influence of this unfortunate book. "Oh," wrote one of them, "the precious convictions which these letters have destroyed! Many who have often declared the great profit they have received under our ministry, were by these induced to leave us. This makes us mourn in secret places."† Hervey himself, were it possible, shared their mourning in heaven over the heedless and heartless stratagem.

The opposition, however, gave way, though slowly. A new champion entered the field, one who had been well tried in itinerant labours and sufferings, and who could not be intimidated by the adversities which so peculiarly beset Methodism in Scotland. Thomas Taylor was a Yorkshire man, a fact of considerable significance in the history of a Methodist preacher of those days. His parents died in his infancy and his education was neglected. He was early of a turbulent and daring disposition. At seven years of age he was habitually profane in his language, and being of a passionate temper—"Oh that I could write this in tears of blood," he says—he frequently swore "in a most dreadful manner," nor did he "stick at lying." One of his brothers took him

* Early Methodist Preachers, vol. i. † Coke and Moore's Wesley.

to his house and attempted to teach him the business of a clothier; but he disliked work, and ran away several times, suffering severely from cold and hunger in his wanderings. As he advanced in youth his evil habits strengthened, and his "mouth was fraught with oaths, lies, and deceit. He became a dexterous gambler, and having much pride and little money, was the more intent on furnishing himself with resources by that art. He was, in fine, one of those reckless cases of early vice which Methodism alone seemed at that day adapted to reach. Whitefield passed through his neighbourhood about his seventeenth year; there was an immense multitude of hearers; the great preacher's "voice was like a trumpet," and the discourse was attended with "an amazing power" to the conscience of young Taylor. He made the best resolutions; but they soon failed, and left him in such wretchedness that he sought relief by attempting to enlist in the army, but fortunately he was half an inch too short for the standard of the recruiting service.

He afterwards heard a sermon from an earnest Independent preacher, which revived and sealed upon his conscience the impressions of Whitefield's discourse. While under deep religious convictions he met with a Methodist layman, who maintained a public meeting in his own house every Sunday evening, and who instructed him respecting his religious duties. His reformation was at once visible to all, but he had many inward conflicts before his awakened conscience found rest. While in retirement, reading his Bible and praying, one evening, he was able to apprehend by faith the atonement. "I saw," he says, "the Lord hanging upon the cross, and the sight caused such love to flow into my soul that I believed that moment, and have never since given up my confidence. I was enabled to cast my soul upon that atoning sacrifice which I saw was made for my offences."*

Thus introduced into the Christian life, Thomas Taylor soon began to travel about Yorkshire, preaching the Gospel to rustic assemblies, as John Nelson had done before him. He heard Thomas Hanby, a veteran of the early Methodist ministry, and was so impressed by the evangelical character of his preaching and the heroism of the "Itinerancy," that he resolved to join it. Walking to London, he was received at the Conference in 1761, and sent into Wales. Two years he traversed the mountains of the principality, enduring hardships from hunger and cold, from journeys among bleak and almost trackless hills in winter, and at times from mobs; but his success was great; he formed numerous

* Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, vol. iii.

societies, and proved himself one of the best of the Methodist itinerant host.

In 1763 he was sent to Ireland, where he laboured two years, suffering not a little from Papists, whose tenets his Yorkshire hardihood led him to attack imprudently, as he confesses. He preached abroad in towns and villages, sometimes depending upon the troops for protection. His fare was often very hard, and he lost for a time his speech and hearing, and nearly lost his life, through sickness occasioned by sleeping in damp beds. At Cork he was especially successful; he preached abroad in every part of the city, and the society was greatly enlarged.

During his laborious ministry thus far he had, by his diligence and that systematic improvement of time which Wesley continually enjoined upon his preachers, gathered a large amount of valuable knowledge, and acquired the use of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages.

It was in 1765 that he entered Scotland. Wesley sent him to introduce Methodism into Glasgow. Thoroughly tried as he had been by the hardships of the itinerant ministry in Wales and Ireland, he says that his new field in Scotland presented tests severer than any he had yet known. The winter was at hand; he was in a strange land; there was no society, no place for the preacher's entertainment, no place even to preach in, and no friend to consult. He took a private lodging, and gave out that he would preach on the Green, a public resort hard by the city. A table was carried to the place, and at the appointed time he found two baker's boys and two old women waiting. His soul sunk within him. He had travelled by land and by water, near six hundred miles, to this city, and such was his congregation! At length, however, he mounted his table and began the singing, which he had entirely to himself. A few more hearers crept together, all seemingly very poor people, till at length he had about two hundred around him. His natural energy, as well as his Christian zeal, was not to be defeated, and the night following he had a more promising congregation. The third night it rained violently; this quite cast him down. "The enemy," he says, "assaulted me sorely, so that I was ready to cry out, 'It is better for me to die than to live.' But God pitied my weakness." The next day the sky cleared up, and he took the field again and kept it steadily every day for about three months. He soon rallied large congregations, and on one occasion the largest assembly he had ever seen gathered to hear him. He mounted his table, but found it too low; a chair was then set upon it, but even this did

not enable him to command the vast multitude. He then ascended a high stone wall and cried aloud, "The hour is coming, and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." He conceived great hopes from the effects of this appeal, as the multitude stood rapt in silence and attention; but when he concluded he was astonished to see them quietly open a lane for him through their midst, and stand calmly staring at him as he walked through it, no one inquiring, "Where dwellest thou?" "I walked home," he says, "much dejected." His ardent Yorkshire nature could not at first interpret this Scotch apathy. He solved the problem afterwards, however, for he discovered that the most important part of a Scotchman's religion is his creed, and the popular creed was thoroughly Calvinistic, notwithstanding Socinianism prevailed among the upper classes. The Scotch wept aloud and fell like dead men under Whitefield's preaching, for Whitefield was a good Calvinist, though he cared little about the "League and Covenant." But Wesley, whose preaching was attended in England with more such phenomena than Whitefield's, was powerless among them except to command their phlegmatic attention.

Hervey's Eleven Letters, garbled by Cudworth, met Taylor at Glasgow. They carried gall and wormwood wherever they went. Arminianism was a fatal heresy, and the best disposed of his hearers seemed perplexed with the difficult problem that so much zeal and devotion as he and his fellow-itinerants showed could co-exist with such amazing heterodoxy.

A generous instance of ministerial conduct involved the persevering Yorkshireman in still greater difficulties. A Scotchman was condemned for murder; Taylor visited him in prison, and attended him to the gallows, where, according to the barbarous law of that day, the unfortunate man's right hand was struck off with an axe, and attached on the gibbet before he himself was suspended. Taylor had reason to believe that "the Lord had plucked him as a brand from the burning," and published an account of his case. The popular theology revolted at this charity for a penitent malefactor. "It is amazing," says the itinerant, "what a cry was raised against me for saying that God had mercy on such a sinner." Scurrilous papers were cried up and down the streets against him, and a zealous Scot commenced a weekly publication to oppose him. His case, he says, was now deplorable, for he had famine within doors and plenty of reproach without. He was compelled to practise the closest economy to save himself

from extreme want. He sold his horse to pay for his lodging, yet he shared his little stock of funds with a poor brother preacher, who, passing through Glasgow for Ireland, had lamed his own horse, and had not money enough left to bear him forward. Taylor confesses that he never kept so many fast days either before or afterwards. It was important, but next to impossible, for him to keep up his credit. He resorted to a little artifice to do so; frequently requesting his landlady not to prepare his humble dinner, he would dress himself before noon and walk out till after dinner-time, and then return to his "hungry room with a hungry stomach," his hostess supposing he had dined elsewhere.

For some time it seemed, indeed, that he was attempting a hopeless task. The severe weather was approaching, and his funds were diminishing. He was beset also with characteristic examples of Scotch economy, which confounded his own frugal experiments. Though his voice was poor he had to do his singing mostly alone, as the Scotch did not know the Methodist hymns or tunes. One of his hearers proposed to become his precentor, after the Kirk custom, and "lead the psalms." Taylor supposed it was an act of Christian compassion, and the experiment proceeded very well for a time, but he was surprised at last by a bill from his precentor for "thirteen shillings fourpence, which was just fourpence a time." Taylor dismissed him and the Scotch psalms together, and began again to sing the Methodist melodies, "the people liking them right well." They soon became familiar, and have never since ceased to be heard in Glasgow.

A few stout mobs and downright persecutions would have suited the evangelist better than these vexatious trials; but though he was perplexed he could not be discouraged. He continued to preach in the streets night and morning till the November weather rendered it impossible. Throngs gathered to hear him, to scent out his heresy if for no other purpose; but some were awakened and converted, and at last the obstinate opposition gave way so far that when no longer able to preach abroad a room was provided for his meetings, and furnished by his hearers with seats and a pulpit. His labours now began to yield fruit; his friends continually increased; the Methodist Society of Glasgow was formed, and Methodism founded there, never, he trusted, to be overthrown, however feebly it had to struggle against the formidable odds which still encompassed it. It is a curious fact, however, that not till the society had increased to forty or fifty members did any one inquire how he was maintained. They then asked him if he had an estate, or supplies

from England. "I told them," he says, "I had neither; but having sold my horse, I had made what little I had go as far as I could. I then explained our custom to them. I told them of the little matter we usually received from our people. The poor souls were much affected, and they very liberally supplied my wants, as also those that came after me." He laboured mightily with them during the ensuing winter, and left them in the spring with seventy members. He had fought a good fight, and he had also kept his faith, for during the severest period of his sufferings a new kirk was opened in Glasgow, an influential member of which had appreciated his fine talents, and offered to settle him as its pastor, with a good salary. "It was," he says, "honour and credit on the one hand, and hunger and contempt on the other;" but to accept it appeared a "betrayal of the trust which was reposed in him" by his brethren. The sentiment of honour was higher among these noble men than honour itself.

Such were Thomas Taylor's "adventures" in Glasgow;* such the history of the origin of Methodism in that city. He went elsewhere in Scotland, labouring for some years with similar trials and success. At Edinburgh he preached usually in the "Octagon" in the morning, and on Castle Hill in the evening. Between Edinburgh and Glasgow he formed a circuit, including Burrowstounness, Linlithgow, Falkirk, and Kilsyth. Thomas Olivers and other itinerants came to his help, and through many obstacles made some progress.†

After Taylor's partial success in Glasgow the Methodist itinerants penetrated to the Highlands, and at his next visit Wesley preached at Inverness, where a society was formed which

* So Southey not unjustly calls them. He refers to them with his usual invidiousness, but with evident admiration of the heroic Methodist.

† During fifty-five years did Taylor pursue his itinerant ministrations in Scotland, England, Wales, and Ireland, encountering mobs, founding societies, and enduring all kinds of hardships. He was a thorough disciplinarian, a great economist of time, an indefatigable student, and a powerful preacher. He was among the first, if not the first, after Wesley's death, to introduce the sacraments among the Methodists, and to break away from the disadvantageous custom till then strictly maintained among their societies (except in London, where Charles Wesley officiated as a Churchman), of never assembling during "Church hours" on the Sabbath. He was nearly eighty years old when he died, honoured and beloved as a veteran throughout the connection. In a sermon a short time before his decease he raised his venerable form in the pulpit, and said with great emphasis: "I should like to die like an old soldier, sword in hand." He was soon after found dead in his chamber. Montgomery's well-known ode, "Servant of God, well done," etc., was written on his death.

continues to this day. His reception was now cordial everywhere, and his "High-Churchism" had so far relaxed that he "laid aside his last portion of bigotry,"* and shared in the communion of the Lord's Supper at the West Kirk, Edinburgh. At a subsequent visit the magistrates of Perth and Arbroath conferred upon him the freedom of those cities.

In 1769 the Methodist preachers pushed their labours with much energy among the Highlanders. Alexander MacNab, followed by Duncan Wright, formed many classes. Wright reacquired the Erse language, and travelled over the country preaching from town to town three times a-day in houses, and usually once a-day in the open air. "Though by this means," he writes, "I had many an aching head and pained breast, yet it was delightful to see hundreds of them attending with streaming eyes, and attention still as night, or to hear them in their simple way singing the praises of God in their own tongue. If ever God said to my heart, *Go, and I will be with thee*, it was then. I extol the name of my adorable Master that my labours were not in vain. How gladly would I have spent my life with these dear souls."

While Wesley and his fellow-labourers were thus extending their cause in all the land, they were called to bear, during the present decade, not a few adversities which were severer than any local inhospitalities or mobs. The societies were in many places distracted by disputes respecting the propriety of dissent from the National Church. Members who had joined them from among Dissenters, especially, could not approve Wesley's extreme loyalty to the Establishment, which still disowned and often persecuted his measures and his people, and such members had the peculiar inconvenience of being under the necessity of going for the sacraments back to the sects which they had left, or to the church, which many of them had never attended. Some of his preachers tired out by his persistence in this questionable policy, deserted him to take charge of independent churches, where they could maintain their self-respect as genuine ministers of the gospel by administering the sacraments to their hearers, and in not a few places discontented Methodists resorted to their ministry.

He was called also to mourn over the death of some of his most esteemed fellow-labourers. In 1762, the eccentric but indefatigable and useful Grimshaw died in the peace of the Gospel. Wesley felt deeply his loss, and devotes several pages of his Journal to an affectionate notice of him, more than to the death

* Coke and Moore's Wesley, iii. 2.

of any other one of his friends. "In sixteen years," says Wesley, "he was only once suspended from his labour by sickness, though he dared all weathers upon the bleak mountains, and used his body with less compassion than a merciful man would use his beast. His soul at various times enjoyed large manifestations of God's love, and he drank deep into his Spirit. His cup ran over, and at some seasons his faith was so strong and his hope so abundant, that higher degrees of spiritual delight would have overpowered his mortal frame." Besides his unusual labours in his own parish, he preached about three hundred times a-year in other places. He fell at last a victim to his pastoral labours during an epidemic fever. His old friend, Jeremiah Robertshaw, a veteran Methodist preacher, approached him on his death-bed. "God bless you, Jerry," he said, "I will pray for you as long as I live; and if there is praying in heaven, I will pray for you there also." "I am as happy as I can be on earth," he declared to another, "and as sure of glory as if I were in it." "*Here goes an unprofitable servant*," were his last and characteristic words. It would have been impossible for such a man not to have thrown himself, soul and body, into the Methodist movement. A loyal Churchman, he was imbued, nevertheless, with the catholic spirit of Methodism. While driving about his circuits, like a horseman on the field of battle, he co-operated with all good men who came upon his track. "I love Christians," he used to say, "true Christians of all parties; I do love them, I will love them, and none shall make me do otherwise."

At his own request his remains were carried to the residence of his son at Ewood, a parish of Halifax, where they were followed by a vast and weeping procession to Luddenden church. According to his dying wish, the mourning crowd sang as they bore his corpse along on the highway. Venn preached his funeral sermon in the churchyard, as the multitude could not be accommodated in the church. He repeated it the next day at Haworth, where thousands assembled from all the neighbouring country, and wept as at the death of a parent. Romaine lamented him in an eloquent funeral discourse at St. Dunstan's, in London. Both Calvinistic and Arminian Methodists universally felt that a prince and a great man had fallen in Israel.*

* He left an only son, who, notwithstanding his strict religious education at Wesley's school in Kingswood, became a drunkard. He revered, however, the example of his parent's piety. While riding home drunk on the old circuit horse of his deceased father, he used to say, "Once thou carried a saint, but now thou carriest a devil." Such recollections and the many prayers

In 1764 died John Manners, a humble labourer, who had spent five years of great usefulness in the lay ministry. Wesley said that he seemed expressly raised up for the extraordinary revivals of 1760, 1761, and 1762. During these three years he preached in Dublin, amid a religious interest seldom or never equalled in that city. He was not eloquent, but rather rude in speech; yet he laboured with his might, and walked intimately with God. "The way is quite clear," he said, as he descended into the valley and shadow of death. "My soul is at liberty."*

The next year, Alexander Coates, the oldest lay preacher then in the Connection, departed to his rest, venerable with years and usefulness. He had preached about a quarter of a century. His pulpit talents are said to have been very extraordinary; he was exceedingly popular, and his conversation "wonderfully pleasant and instructive." He always called Christ his "Master." He was one of the many humble founders of Methodism, who left no account of their laborious lives, but whose record is on high. One of his brethren inquired, a short time before he ceased to breathe, if he had followed cunningly devised fables? "No! no! no!" was his emphatic reply. "Do you see land?" he was then asked. "Yes, I do," he answered, and "after waiting a few moments at anchor, he put into the quiet harbour." His old friend and faithful co-labourer, Christopher Hopper, says, with an affection and pathos which only such fellow-labourers and fellow-sufferers could feel, "I saw him fall asleep in the arms of our adorable Saviour without a doubt. Farewell, my brother, for a season. But we shall meet again to part no more."†

Wesley continued to be attacked with fierceness through the press. He had effectually answered Lavington; during the present period he replied to a more able and influential prelate, Warburton, Bishop of Worcester. Warburton had assailed him in a tract "On the Office and Operations of the Holy Spirit." It was remarkable chiefly for its personal misrepresentations of Wesley, and the indication which it affords of the low standard of religious opinion at the time among the highest functionaries of the National Church. The bishop's theology appears but little above the ethics of natural religion. He cites whatever his rationalistic sagacity could detect in Wesley's writings as liable

that ascended for him at last prevailed. He repented with bitter anguish, and died exclaiming, "What will my father say when he sees that I have got to heaven?"

* Myles's Chronological History of the Methodists, chap. 4.

† Wesley's Journal, anno 1765; Early Methodist Preachers, vol. 1.

to be construed into credulity or enthusiasm, and the frankness with which Wesley recorded extraordinary facts afforded abundant materials for his invidious purpose.*

Wesley is classed as "special among modern fanatics," and as "claiming almost every apostolic gift in as full and ample a manner as they were possessed of old." His reply not only "fairly meets the attack," as Southey admits,† but fairly refutes it in the most essential points. Wesley could not, either as a Christian or as a philosopher, agree with the prelate's Deistical views of Scriptural phenomena, and contends, with what his friends should esteem admirable frankness, though his enemies would call it weakness, for several remarkable facts which he had recorded, and which Warburton condemned as impossible, unless they were miraculous, and incredible if they were inclined to be so. Wesley was vague, if not contradictory, in his judgment respecting the swoons and convulsions of his hearers at Bristol, Newcastle, and other places. He was, as has been shown, not a little perplexed by them. At Newcastle he ascribed them mostly, if not entirely, to demoniacal agency. At Everton he seems to have supposed some of them to be the effect of Divine influence. Warburton had advantage from these facts; but the phenomena were new to Wesley; they have been more common in our day, yet even our later science is baffled by them. Wesley's "Letter" to the bishop was long and elaborate, and remarkable for its candour and respectfulness. It is a fine example of both his style and logic, though it consists chiefly of citations and concise comments.

Fletcher was zealously at work during the present period. He had joined a Methodist class in London, and his first public exercise, after his ordination, had been, as we have seen, in one of Wesley's chapels. He continued some time in the metropolis assisting Wesley, and preaching and administering the Lord's Supper at Lady Huntingdon's mansion. On returning to Tern Hall, Shropshire, his liberal patron, in whose family he had been tutor, offered him the living of Dunham; the parish was small,

* It is noticeable that Wesley records, in but comparatively few instances, his own opinion of the many marvels related in his Journal. Never was a more Baconian record made of such phenomena; they are usually given circumstantially as facts, for the examination of the learned or the curious, and are of no small value in this respect. He has, however, given us sufficient evidence of his belief respecting supernatural agency in physical phenomena. This fact has already been shown in the text, and will be further examined in its appropriate place.

† Southey's Life of Wesley, chap. 24.

its labour light, and its income good, being £400. But Fletcher had previously preached several times in the populous and degraded parish of Madeley, and had conceived such sympathy for its wretched inhabitants that he declined the offer of Dunham as affording "too much money and too little work." His patron then proposed to give Dunham to the vicar of Madeley, and secure the latter for him. He thus, by an act of self-sacrifice, became settled in the obscure parish which his name has rendered familiar in all the Protestant world. Few places in England needed more the labours of such a man. It was a region of mines and manufactures. Its population was debased, and its congregation small. For months he went about his parish early on the Sabbath morning, with a bell in his hand, to awake such parishioners as excused their neglect of worship by alleging that they could not wake early enough to prepare their families for the service. The vicious began to be reclaimed, and persecutions arose. Sometimes his public services were interrupted by outbreaks of scurrilous language from offended hearers. A bull-bait was attempted on one occasion, near the spot where he had announced a public service, and a part of the rabble was appointed to "bait the parson; to pull him from his horse, and to set the dogs upon him." He escaped only by a providential detention at the funeral of a parishioner. His preaching against drunkenness aroused all the maltmen and publicans of the town against him. A magistrate threatened him with his cane and with imprisonment, and many of the neighbouring gentry and clergy joined his persecutors. A clergyman posted on the church-door a paper, charging him with schism and rebellion. Some of his friends were arrested. He was, in fine, subjected to the usual treatment of the Methodist clergy of the times, and he laboured with their usual zeal and success. Like Grimshaw and Berridge, Thompson and Venn, he established preaching appointments at Madeley Wood, at Coalbrook Dale, and most other places within ten miles of his parish; and Madeley became, like Haworth, Everton, St. Gennis, and Huddersfield, a radiating point of Methodist influence and labours for the whole region around it. With incessant preaching he combined the most diligent pastoral labours. He went from house to house, sympathizing with the afflicted, helping the poor, ministering to the sick, and admonishing the vicious. His liberality to the poor is said, by his successor in the parish, to have been scarcely credible.* He led a life of severe abstinence that he might feed the hungry; he clothed him-

* Gilpin's Biographical Notes in Fletcher's "Portrait of St. Paul."

self in cheap attire that he might clothe the naked; he sometimes unfurnished his house that he might supply suffering families with necessary articles. Thus devoted to his holy office, he soon changed the tide of opposition which had raged against him, and won the reverence and admiration of his people; and many looked upon their homes as consecrated by his visits.

His preaching is described as greatly effective. He spoke the English language not only with correctness, but with eloquence. There was, says Gilpin, who heard him often, an energy in his discourse which was irresistible; to hear him without admiration was impossible. Powerful as are his writings, his preaching was mightier; his "living word soared with an eagle's flight; he basked in the sun, carried his young ones on his wings, and seized the prey for his Master."

Meanwhile his devout habit of mind quickly matured into saintliness itself. We look in vain through the records of Roman or Protestant piety for a more perfect example of the consecration of the whole life, inward and outward. For a time he erred by his asceticism, living on vegetables and bread, and devoting two whole nights each week to meditation and prayer, errors which he afterwards acknowledged. He received Wesley's doctrine of Perfection, and not only wrote in its defence, but exemplified it through a life of purity, charity, and labour, which was as faultless, perhaps, as was ever lived by mortal man.* Even in theological controversy his spirit was never impeachable. "Sir, he was a luminary," said Venn to a brother clergyman; "a luminary, did I say? He was a *sun*." "I have known," he added, "all the great men for these fifty years, but I have known none like him."†

It was during our present period (1768) that the theological school of Lady Huntingdon, at Trevecca, was opened, and Fletcher appointed to its presidency. Benson, the Methodist commentator, and its head master, says that Fletcher was received there on his frequent visits as an angel of God. Sober and reserved as was the usual style of Benson, his pen glows when he writes of those occasions. "The reader," he says, "will pardon me if he thinks I exceed; my heart kindles while I write. Here it was I saw, shall I say, an angel in human flesh? I should not far exceed the truth if I said so. But here I saw a descendant

* Southey says: "No age or country has ever produced a man of more fervent piety or more perfect charity; no Church has ever possessed a more apostolic minister." Life of Wesley, chap. 25.

† Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, chap. 30.

of fallen Adam so fully raised above the ruins of the fall, that though by the body he was tied down to earth, yet was his whole *conversation in heaven;* yet was his life from day to day *hid with Christ in God.* Prayer, praise, love, and zeal, all ardent, elevated above what one would think attainable in this state of frailty, were the elements in which he continually lived. Languages, arts, sciences, grammar, rhetoric, logic, even divinity itself, as it is called, were all laid aside when he appeared in the school-room among the students. And they seldom hearkened long before they were all in tears, and every heart caught fire from the flame that burned in his soul."

Closing these addresses, he would say, "As many of you as are athirst for the fulness of the Spirit of God follow me into my room." Many usually hastened thither, and it was like going into the Holiest of Holies. Two or three hours were spent there in such prevailing prayer as seemed to bring heaven down to earth. "Indeed," says Benson, "I frequently thought, while attending to his heavenly discourse and divine spirit, that he was so different from, and superior to, the generality of mankind, as to look more like Moses or Elijah, or some prophet or apostle come again from the dead, than a mortal man dwelling in a house of clay!"

Besides his labours in Madeley and the region round about, and his important services among the ministerial candidates at Trevecca, Fletcher made preaching visits to London, Bath, Kingswood, Bristol, Wales, and Yorkshire. He sometimes accompanied Wesley and Lady Huntingdon in their travels, attended the annual Conferences, was indefatigable in the use of his pen for the promotion of Methodism, and took rank as one of its most conspicuous representatives. Madeley became one of Wesley's favourite stopping places in his ministerial travels. The church could not contain the congregation which flocked to hear him there, and, as in his visits to Grimshaw, at Haworth, he had to stand on a platform in one of its windows, preaching to them within and without. "I found," he says on one of his visits, "employment enough for the intermediate hours in praying with various companies who hung about the house, insatiably hungering and thirsting after the good Word. Mr. Grimshaw, at his first coming to Haworth, had not such a prospect as this. There are many adversaries indeed, but yet they cannot shut the open and effectual door."

Wesley had passed, during the present decade, through many trials: domestic troubles that would have made life a burden to

most men; disturbances in some of his societies which had thus far no parallel in their history; persecutions from the mob which, if less severe towards himself personally, were more so towards his lay preachers than ever; and travels and labours which surpassed those of any preceding years of his life. But he closed this period, at the Conference of 1770, with results and prospects such as had never before cheered him. He could hardly now fail to perceive that Methodism was to be a permanent fact in the religious history of his country. Without design on his part, its disciplinary system had developed into consistency and strength; its chapels dotted the land; its ministerial plans formed a network of religious labours which extended over England, Wales, Ireland, a part of Scotland, and reached even to North America and the West India Islands. Seven years before, when the number of its circuits was first recorded, they were but thirty-one; they now amounted to fifty. Its corps of lay itinerants included one hundred and twenty-one men, besides as many, perhaps more, local preachers, who were usually diligent labourers in their sectional spheres. The membership of its societies was nearly *thirty thousand* strong.

Towards the close of this period he was further cheered by an extraordinary opportunity for the enlargement of his great work, one which has been attended with its grandest results. A new sign appeared in the western sky, and was hailed by the Conference with thanksgiving, with prayers, and contributions of men and of money. The little colonies of German "Palatines," which Methodism had redeemed from gross demoralization in Ireland, had been mostly dispersed. Wesley, as he year after year passed over that country, lamented their gradual disappearance, but he saw not then the special design which divine Providence was to accomplish by them. In 1760 some of them, among whom was Philip Embury, emigrated to New York.* Subsequently another company arrived, among whom was Barbara Heck,† through whose instrumentality Embury and his Methodist associates were led, in 1765, to resume in the New World the Methodistic discipline and labours which they had adopted in Ireland. Some years before, Captain Webb, of the British army, had been con-

* Not 1765, as heretofore stated in Methodist publications. See letter to the author from Dr. G. C. M. Roberts, of Baltimore, in the *Christian Advocate and Journal* for Sept. 2, 1858.

† Not Hick, as she is called in all former Methodist books which mention her. The Heck family emigrated to Canada, and retain the original name.

verted under Wesley's preaching in Bristol. Wesley had a strong regard for military men; he liked authority, obedience, methodical habits, and courage; he found that soldiers had made good Methodists in Ireland and Scotland, as well as in Flanders, and that Methodist soldiers made good preachers, and especially good disciplinarians, as in the example of John Haime, Sampson Staniforth, Duncan Wright, and others.* Captain (then Lieutenant) Webb was therefore soon licensed by him as a local preacher. Being sent on military duty to New York, he preached in his uniform, and with great success, for the newly-organized society. He sent a call to Wesley for preachers, two of whom were despatched from the Conference of 1769. Previous to the Conference of 1770 Wesley received letters from these messengers. reporting a society in New York of about one hundred members, and a chapel which accommodated seven hundred hearers, and yet only a third part of those who crowded to the preaching could get in. "There appears," wrote one of the newly-arrived preachers, "such a willingness in America to hear the Word as I never saw before."† Whitefield had spread the influence of the Methodist revival in the American Churches from Maine to Georgia; but his mission was ending—he was dying in New England. The great work of Arminian Methodism in the New World had begun, and already two young men, Francis Asbury and Richard Whatcoat, who were to be among its earliest bishops, were travelling circuits in England.

* Wesley advised the Methodists to learn the military exercise, that they might the better defend their country when the French threatened to invade it in 1756. (Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 20.) He made an offer to the Government, "when the kingdom was in imminent danger," to raise troops among his people. He was a staunch English patriot, and believing that fighting was sometimes necessary, believed also that none were fit for it but such as were fit to die. Like Uncle Toby, he thought soldiers, above all other men, should be saints.

† See the correspondence of Pilmoor and Boardman, in Coke and Moore's Life of Wesley, iii., 3.

CHAPTER VI.

CONFERENCES FROM 1760 TO 1770.

The Greek Bishop, Erasmus—Wesley's Proposition of Union with Evangelical Clergymen—Twelve of them meet at the Conference of 1764—They decline his Terms—Proceedings of the Session of 1765—Tickets—First Temperance Societies—Reports of Members first made in 1766—Wesley's Views of his own Authority—He requires his Preachers to Study—Whitefield, Howell Harris, and Laymen present at the Session of 1767—Its Statistics—The Circulation of Books—Term of Circuit Appointments—The Conference of 1768—Its Statistics—The Preachers required to abandon secular Business—John Nelson and William Shent—Origin of Methodism at Leeds—Books—Field Preaching—Early Rising—Sanctification—Session of 1769—Preachers sent to America—First Provision for Preachers' Wives—Wesley laments the Unwillingness of the Regular Clergy to co-operate with him—He proposes a Plan for the Perpetuation of his Lay Ministry—Session of 1770—Its Minute on Calvinism.

It has already been stated that no Minutes remain of the Conferences held in the present decade before the year 1765. Of the session of August 29th, 1760, Wesley gives but a passing intimation in his Journal. His allusion to that of September 1st, 1761, is but a sentence. That of August 9th, 1762, was held at Leeds.* It is an interesting proof of the mutual good understanding of the Calvinistic and Arminian Methodists, that most of the leaders of the former were present with Wesley at this Conference. Lady Huntingdon, Whitefield, Romaine, Madan, and Venn, attended it.† Wesley only says of it: "Our Conference began on Tuesday morning, and we had great reason to bless God for His gracious presence from the beginning to the end." It is evident, however, that the demand of both people and preachers for a more general administration of the sacraments in their societies had by this time become still more urgent, for early in the next year Wesley obtained the ordination of Dr. Jones, one of his preachers, and classical teacher at Kingswood school, from a Greek bishop by the name of Erasmus, who was travelling at the time in England. Several other lay preachers received ordination from him also, and some clamour arose from the fact; but their sufficient apology was that the prelates of the National Church

* Not at Bristol, as Smith says: History of Methodism, book ii., chap. 2., See Wesley's Journal, and Myles's Chronological History, chap. 3.

† Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, chap. 17.

still refused them this courtesy.* Charles Wesley, however, would not recognize the ordination of Dr. Jones, nor share with him in the administration of the sacraments. Jones, who was a man of piety and learning, was justly offended by this ungenerous treatment, and left the Connection.

The Conference of July 19th, 1763, was held at London, amid the ferment occasioned by Maxfield's secession. "It was a great blessing," says Wesley, "that we had peace among ourselves, while so many were making themselves ready for battle." The circuits now numbered twenty in England, two in Scotland, two in Wales, and seven in Ireland; in all, thirty-one. At this session the first provision for "old, worn-out preachers" was made, by the establishment of a general fund, to which each preacher contributed ten shillings. It was the beginning of that series of "Connectional Funds" which has since become so extended and effective among British Methodists.†

To the session of August 6th, 1764, Wesley devotes but three brief sentences in his Journal. "The great point," he says, "I now laboured for, was a good understanding with our brethren of the clergy who were heartily engaged in propagating vital religion." Seven years before, Walker, of Truro, a devout man but rigid Churchman, had proposed that he should abandon all his societies in parishes over which evangelical clergymen presided. Wesley's good sense led him to see that this course would

* Toplady attacked Wesley severely on this occasion. Thomas Olivers conclusively answered the attack. See Myles's Chron. History, chap. 3. Southey affects, without reason, to doubt the episcopal character of Erasmus. It was satisfactorily ascertained by Wesley before the ordinations. Compare notes to Southey's Wesley, chap. 26, with Myles, as above. It is one of the characteristic blunders of the author of "The Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon" that he says: "Wesley was accused of a breach of the Oath of Supremacy by thus availing himself of the powers of a foreign prelate; and accused also of pressing the prelate to make him (Wesley) a bishop. The former charge was denied by Mr. Olivers, and the latter justified," etc. This statement is absolutely false; Olivers denied the latter accusation on the authority of Wesley. Wesley himself, in reply to an attack from Rowland Hill, declared: "I never entreated anything from Bishop Erasmus, who had abundant unexceptionable credentials as to his episcopal character. Nor did he ever 'reject any overture' made by me. Herein Mr. Hill has been misinformed. I deny the fact; let him produce the evidence."

† It was during this year that the Minutes of preceding Conferences from 1748 were compiled and placed in the "Octavo Minutes," with the date of 1749 (see page 158), a fact which has inextricably confused their data. I have chosen, therefore, to use whatever material they may afford for the historical illustration of Methodism, in distinct chapters on its doctrines and economy.

soon result in their extinction, and the defeat of the great work for which God had thrust him out. He desired their continued connection with the Church; he desired the co-operation of pious clergymen in their local management, for thereby he could secure the sacraments in a manner satisfactory to most of them, but he could not abandon his own responsibility for them; for how few of even the evangelical clergy, if disposed, were capable of sustaining them in the special work to which they were providentially designated, and what certainty could he have that their successors would do so? He therefore declined the proposition of Walker. A more prudent and important act had hardly occurred in his history. He was, however, still intent on the union of all evangelical clergymen in the great revival which he was conducting, and on the stedfast union of his people with the Church. He therefore addressed a circular letter to many of the most evangelical clergy of the Establishment, proposing, not any concession of opinions, for "they might agree or disagree touching absolute decrees on the one hand, and perfection on the other," but a more catholic spirit, and better co-operation with him, as a member of the Church of England, in the spread of true religion throughout the land.* It is to this correspondence that he refers in the brief allusion of his journal to the present Conference. Though only three clergymen had responded to his overtures, no less than twelve met him at the session, but not in the catholic spirit which he himself had manifested. They insisted, in fine, upon the very course which Walker had proposed and Wesley had rejected seven years before. It was a momentous juncture to Methodism; and to Wesley's calm stedfastness subsequent generations owe the fact that it was not then absorbed into the Establishment, and that the organic consolidation which it had been for some time assuming was not effectually counteracted. Charles Wesley himself had the indiscretion to take side with these clergymen against him, and the heedlessness to declare that if he were a parish minister the lay itinerants "should not preach in his parish."† The lay preachers showed both their good sense and self-respect by unanimously agreeing with Wesley; and as the clerical visitors would not unite with him, except on their own conditions, he determined to pursue his providential course without them. And thus was another step taken forward towards the legitimate independence and permanence of Methodism.

* See the whole correspondence with Walker and others in Coke and Moore's Life of Wesley, ii., 4.

† Myles's Chron. History, chap. 4.

With the twenty-second Conference, held at Manchester, August 20th, 1765, began the regular annual publication of the Minutes. They now assumed more than ever the form of business-like documents. Theological and ecclesiastical questions are seldom discussed in them, as these subjects had already been settled with sufficient definiteness for the present progress of the body. The names of preachers admitted on trial, of the assistants, helpers, and circuits, the appointments for the ensuing year, and financial arrangements, with singularly minute rules of discipline for the societies as well as for the preachers, make up their substance.

At the session for this year were reported twenty-five circuits, with seventy-one preachers, in England; four, with four preachers, in Scotland; two, with two preachers, in Wales; and eight, with fifteen preachers, in Ireland, making thirty-nine circuits and ninety-two lay itinerants, besides the Wesleys, their clerical coadjutors, and a numerous corps of local preachers, many of whom effectively devoted a large portion of their time to itinerant labours. The title of "Superannuated Preachers" occurs this year for the first time in the Minutes, and the financial plan for their relief was further matured. The certificate, or "Ticket," by which members of the societies could, in removing, transfer their membership to their new places of residence, was adopted, and became a permanent custom. In 1749 the chapels had been legally settled upon trustees. A person was now appointed to examine their deeds, and see that vacancies among their trustees were filled. It was ordered that men and women should sit apart, that field-preaching should be maintained wherever possible,* and love-feasts not be continued longer than an hour and a-half, as "every person should be home by nine o'clock." Preachers were directed to "exhort all that could, in every congregation, to sing," and to see that they were taught to sing by note; to enjoin upon the heads of families the duty of family prayer, with the reading of the Scriptures, night and morning, and to recommend them to be good "economists." The phrases "brother" and "sister" were to be used "*prudently;*" tobacco and drams were not to be touched by preachers on "any pretence," and were to be denounced among the people.†

* Wesley wrote to one of his preachers: "If you desire to promote the work of God, you should preach abroad as often as possible. Nothing destroys the work of the devil like this." Letter 678.

† "So that in fact the Methodist societies were the first temperance societies." Watson's Life of Wesley, chap. 9.

The twenty-third session was held in Leeds, August 12th, 1766; forty circuits were reported. For the first time we now have an attempt at a census of the societies, but it is too imperfect to afford an aggregate estimate of their members. Ireland and Wales, as also London and other circuits, made no returns; Cornwall reported over twenty-two hundred; Grimshaw's Haworth circuit more than fifteen hundred; Nelson's Birstal circuit nearly fourteen hundred; Leeds more than one thousand; Newcastle eighteen hundred; Lancashire seventeen hundred and forty-two; Edinburgh one hundred and five, and Dundee three hundred and twenty-one.

During several years subscriptions had been made for the relief of suffering societies. The amount reported at the present year was seven hundred pounds, one hundred and fifty of which were sent to Aberdeen and Edinburgh. The whole debt of the societies for their chapels and preachers' houses was £11,383. "We shall be utterly ruined," said Wesley, "if we go on at this rate;" and it was ordered that no building should be undertaken till two-thirds of the necessary money should be subscribed. It was again asserted that the Methodists were not Dissenters; they were recommended to attend the Church service every Sabbath, and the preachers were directed to hold their Sunday worship at five o'clock in the morning, and the same hour in the evening, to avoid interference with the Church worship.

In a concluding address, remarkable for its length and pointedness, Wesley stated the grounds of his power as providentially placed at the head of the Arminian Methodist societies, and exhorted the preachers to more faithfulness, detailing, as reasons, the prevalent faults of their people.

After describing the unavoidable manner in which the Societies and Conferences had involved him in his present responsibility, and the impossibility of his now abandoning it with a good conscience, he remarked, "I did not seek any part of this power; it came upon me unawares; but when it was come, not daring to bury that talent, I used it to the best of my judgment. Yet I never was fond of it; I always did, and do now, bear it as my burden, the burden which God lays upon me, and therefore I dare not yet lay it down. But if you can tell me any one, or any five men, to whom I may transfer this burden, who *can* and *will* do just what I do now, I will heartily thank both them and you." "Preaching twice or thrice a-day," he added, "is no burden to me at all; but the care of all the preachers and all the people is a burden indeed." As he advances in his exhortations to the

preachers his sentences grow ardent with earnestness. He insists on increased pastoral labour, visits from house to house, and the instruction of the children of their people. After answering the objection that this thorough work would preclude all study, he proceeds to complain of their want of diligence in the latter respect, and of their desultory habits of reading. "Why are we not more knowing?" he asks; "we talk, talk, read history, or what comes next to hand. We must, absolutely must, cure this evil or give up the whole work.* But how? Read the *most useful* books, and that regularly and constantly. Steadily spend all the morning in this employment, or at least five hours in twenty-four. 'But I have *no taste* for reading.' Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your trades. 'But different men have different tastes.' Therefore, some may read less than others, but none should read less than this."

He finally urges them to go "into every house and teach every one therein, young and old;" to spend at least an hour twice a week with the children of the societies wherever ten of them could be assembled; to rise at four in the morning; to observe five o'clock in the afternoon for private prayer, and to bear in mind that any time for this duty is no time. "Oh let us," he concludes, "stir up the gift of God that is in us! Let us no more sleep as do others! But whatsoever our hand findeth to do *let us* do it with our might!"

On August 18th, 1767, was held in London the twenty-fourth annual Conference.† The continued harmony of the two sections of Methodism is indicated by the fact that both Whitefield and Howell Harris were present. Several lay itinerants and local preachers also attended it. Nine new preachers were "admitted on trial," among whom was Francis Asbury, afterwards the chief founder of American Methodism. Two desisted from travelling, and six probationers were admitted to full membership. Forty circuits were reported. Their number, however, does not show the extent of the field, for they were continually changing, and two or three were often combined in one. England had twenty-five, Ireland nine, Scotland five. All Wales was this year included in one. Twenty-five preachers were designated to those of England, nineteen to those of Ireland, seven to Scotland, and

* It is worthy of notice that this sweeping declaration was uttered by him in the same address in which occurs the much-abused passage; "Gaining knowledge is a good thing, but saving souls is better."

† It is numbered by mistake as the twenty-third in the Octavo Minutes, edition of 1812: London.

three to Wales. There were 22,410 members in the English societies, 2801 in the Irish, 468 in the Scotch, and 232 in the Welsh. The comparatively small number reported from Wales arose from the fact that while Calvinistic Methodism formed but few societies in the rest of the country, it had begun in Wales, under Howell Harris, by their organization, and as Wesley disowned dogmatic terms of membership, and recognized the whole Methodistic revival as a unit, the Welsh converts of his preachers very naturally resorted to the societies of Harris. It seems never to have occasioned a demur on his part.

The membership of the societies amounted to 25,911:* London circuit reported 2180; Bristol, 1177; Cornwall, 2038; Staffordshire, 1994; Lancashire, 2000; Leeds, 1088; Bristol, 1476; Haworth, 1356; Newcastle, 1910.

The examination of the characters of preachers, now an invariable part in the proceedings, seems to have occupied most of the time of the session, as but few other important items of business are recorded. Among these was the better circulation of books; a means of usefulness which began almost at the origin of Methodism, and may thus be considered the commencement of the popular and systematic use of the religious press by evangelical Protestantism. Hitherto books had been sold on all the circuits; the assistants were now instructed to "give them away prudently," and beg money from the rich to pay for them for the poor.

A singular apprehension had been expressed by the trustees of Wednesbury Society, that the conference might impose the same preacher upon them for many years. They seem to have prized the itinerancy, and the Conference, to relieve their fears, allowed to be inserted, in the deeds of "Preaching-houses," the promise "that the same preacher shall not be sent ordinarily above one, never above two years together." English Methodists afterwards found it convenient to change the term to three years. Quarterly fasts in all the societies were ordered at this session. "Love and harmony," says Wesley, "reigned from the beginning to the end."

The twenty-fifth Conference was held at Bristol, August 16th, 1768. Eleven probationers were admitted to membership, and twelve candidates were received on trial, among whom was George Shadford, another name known in American Methodist history. Two desisted from travelling. The contributions toward the payment of debts on chapels and preaching-houses were £5666,

* This is Myles's estimate. (Chron. Hist.) The aggregate given in the Octavo Minutes is 26,341.

besides the collection of £173 for Kingswood school. The financial system which has since been a distinguishing characteristic of English Methodism, had already begun to take efficiency under the systematic genius of Wesley. The whole debt remaining in England, Ireland, and Scotland, was £7728. Forty circuits were reported, and 27,341 members, showing a gain of 1430 over the returns of the preceding session.

While some circuits returned an increase, others reported a declension, and an inquiry was made why the preachers were not more effective. The reason most discussed was the fact, hitherto quite general, of their partial devotion to secular business. This had been to some extent necessary, their support by the societies having been quite deficient. John Nelson, as we have stated, worked as a mason during the day and preached at night. William Shent, one of the earliest of the itinerants, had maintained himself by a humble craft in Leeds. He kept it up by hiring assistants, and by returning frequently to his shop from his distant fields of labour, and at last gave his entire time to it, excepting such intervals as he could spare for preaching excursions in the vicinity—a fact which seems to have had a serious if not fatal effect on his religious character.*

Wesley now saw that the time had come to correct this inconvenience. He did not deny its necessity under some circumstances, as in the case of St. Paul, but the keeping of shops, or dealing in merchandise, he pronounced "an evil in itself, an evil in its consequences." Those views of their character, as legitimate preachers of the Gospel, which he had already expressed, were again indicated by the fact that he applied to them the passages of Holy Scripture which assert the right of Christian pastors to a pecuniary support from the Church. He even appealed to the office of Ordination in the Liturgy of the National Church as relevant to the case, thereby classing his itinerants, in this respect, with the regular clergy. "Therefore," he concludes, "give up all, and attend to the one business, and God will recompense you a hundred-fold in this world as well as in the world to come."

The increased circulation of books was urged as a means of

* Three female members of his family were the first Methodists of Leeds, and are still held in affectionate remembrance there as "the three Marys." On hearing of the fame of John Nelson, when he began to exhort among his neighbours at Birstal, they went thither to see him, and soon after opened the way for him at Leeds. He preached his first sermon there in front of Shent's shop. See Pawson's Life in Lives of Early Wesleyan Preachers, vol. ii. p. 60.

checking the lamented declension. Wesley, from the very beginning of his public career, seemed to have a sublime idea of the power of the religious press; he used it continually, and never ceased to exhort his preachers to circulate books and tracts. "Carry them with you in every round," he said; "leave not a stone unturned." They were to be presented everywhere among the people, and even portions of them read by the preachers in the congregations, in order to promote their sale.

Field preaching was to be kept up diligently, and it is evident that Wesley intended it should never be abandoned—never, at least, while any considerable portion of the population neglected the house of God. The morning five o'clock preaching was to be maintained wherever twenty persons could be found to attend it. This he deemed absolutely necessary for the success of Methodism; "it is," he says, "the glory of the Methodists. Rising early is equally good for soul and body. It helps the nerves better than a thousand medicines; and in particular preserves the sight, and prevents lowness of spirits more than can well be imagined."

He exhorted them to give more attention than ever to the doctrine of sanctification. "I ask, once for all, Shall we defend this perfection or give it up? You all agree to defend it, meaning thereby, as we did from the beginning, salvation from all sin by the love of God and our neighbour filling the heart. The Papists say, 'This cannot be obtained till we have been in purgatory.' The Dissenters say, 'It will be attained as soon as the soul and body part.' The old Methodists said, 'It may be attained before we die, a moment after it is too late.' You are all agreed we may be saved from all sin before death. The substance then is settled." As to the question, Is the change instantaneous or gradual? he argues that it is both; that from the moment of justification there may be a gradual sanctification, a daily growth in grace; but that if sin ceases before death, there must, in the nature of things, be an instantaneous change; there must be a last moment wherein it does exist, and a first moment wherein it does not. But should the preacher insist upon both one and the other? Certainly, he replies; he should insist on the gradual change, and that earnestly and continually. But there are reasons why he should insist on the instantaneous one also. If there be such a blessed change before death, all believers should be encouraged to expect it, because the more earnestly they expect it, the more steadily and swiftly does the gradual experience of grace go on in their hearts, the more watchful are they against all sin, the more zealous of

good works; whereas the contrary effects were usually observed when this expectation ceased. They are *saved by hope;* by this hope of a total renovation saved with a gradually increasing salvation. Destroy this hope, and that salvation usually stands still. Therefore, he concludes, whoever would advance the gradual salvation of believers should strongly insist upon the instantaneous one.

On the first day of August, 1769, began at Leeds the twenty-sixth Conference. The number of circuits reported was forty-six, showing a gain of six. The aggregate of members was 28,263, showing an increase of 922. Ten probationers were admitted, and twelve candidates received on trial. Six ceased to travel.

It was at this Conference that the first appeal for Methodist preaching from America was presented by Wesley. "Who is willing to go?" he asked. Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor responded, and were appointed to the distant field. The occasion could not fail to produce a deep interest in the assembly. Methodism had already begun its work in the West Indies by Nathaniel Gilbert, who had formed a society of two hundred negroes in Antigua. Whitefield had spread it in spirit and power among the independent churches of North America, where he was about to die. It was now to take an organic form in the New World by the agency of Wesley's lay preachers. "What can we do further in token of our brotherly love?" he asked, after the appointment of Boardman and Pilmoor. "Let us now make a collection among ourselves," was the prompt response, and the liberal sum of £70 was collected among these generous men, most of whom were habitual sufferers from want. Twenty of the seventy pounds were appropriated for the voyage of the two missionaries, and fifty were sent toward paying the debt of "Wesley Chapel," the first that ever bore that name, and the first Methodist church of the Western hemisphere.

As measures had been adopted at the preceding Conference to relieve the preachers from dependence upon secular business for a maintenance, another step forward for their support, and towards the permanent organization of the lay ministry, was now taken by the enactment of a regular circuit collection for an "allowance" to their wives. Only about one-third of them seem yet to have been married men; but as these had thus far been appointed only to the wealthiest circuits, in order that their families might not unnecessarily suffer, the effective operation of the itinerant system had been seriously restricted, and its talents distributed not so much according to the need of the societies as to the necessities of the preachers. The allowance now made for

a wife was small, being but ten pounds a-year; but it was the beginning of a better provision, which in our day has secured to Wesleyan preachers and their families a more competent and more reliable average support than is afforded perhaps by any other religious community of England, not excepting the National Church itself.

Wesley was now sixty-six years old. It was prudent to think of the means necessary to perpetuate the unity of his preachers and people after his death. He read a paper to the Conference on this subject. He referred to the failure of all his efforts to secure the co-operation of even the "evangelical" portion of the clergy of the Establishment, and the fact that from among the fifty or sixty to whom he had addressed his circular letter on the subject only three had responded. "So I give this up," he said, with undissembled grief: "I can do no more. They are a rope of sand, and such will they continue." But it was otherwise with his own travelling fellow-labourers. They were one body, acting in concert and by united counsels. And now was the time to consider what could be done in order to continue this union. As long as he lived there would be no great difficulty, for he, under God, was a centre of union to them. They all knew him, they all loved him for his work's sake, and therefore, were it only out of regard to him, would continue connected with each other. But by what means might this connection be preserved when God should remove him.

He proposed that on notice of his death all the preachers in England and Ireland should repair to London within six weeks; that they should seek God by solemn prayer and fasting; draw up articles of agreement, to be signed by those who chose to act in concert; dismiss in a friendly manner those who should not so choose; select by votes a *committee* of three, five, or seven, each of whom was to be a *moderator* in his turn—to do what he did: "propose preachers to be tried, admitted, or excluded; fix the place of each preacher for the ensuing year, and the time of the next Conference."

It was further proposed that a document should be signed by all who agreed to these suggestions, pledging them, first, To devote themselves entirely to God; denying themselves, taking up their cross daily; steadily aiming at one thing—to save their own souls and the souls of their hearers; secondly, To preach the *old Methodist doctrines*, as contained in the Minutes, and no other; thirdly, To observe and enforce the whole *Methodist discipline* as defined in the Minutes.

It was finally ordered that this plan should be issued in the Minutes, and submitted to the consideration of the preachers, many of whom were not present at the session. It was held in suspense by Wesley during several years, but was brought up for consideration at the Conferences of 1773, 1774, and 1775, and signed by all the preachers present at those sessions, amounting to one hundred and one. The arrangement was afterwards superseded by Wesley's Deed of Declaration, but it is worthy of this passing notice, as a proof of his growing conviction that Methodism would be compelled, sooner or later, to take an independent and permanent form.*

The twenty-seventh Conference was held in London, August 7th, 1770. Eighteen candidates were received on probation, and sixteen probationers admitted into membership. Five members ceased to travel. Fifty circuits were reported, being an increase of four. The last in the list is especially significant; it reads: "Fiftieth, *America*, Joseph Pilmoor, Richard Boardman, Robert Williams, John King." Volumes of history were anticipated in that brief sentence.

The returns of members of societies amounted to 29,179, showing a gain of 1143. The payments on society debts amounted to £1700, but the sum remaining unpaid was nearly £7000. A resolution, characteristic of Wesley's strict economy, was adopted, putting a stop to all building for the ensuing year. No new house was to be erected, no alteration nor addition made in any old one, unless the society concerned should defray the expense, without lessening its yearly collections.

Forty-three preachers' wives were to be provided for during the ensuing year, and the former regulation respecting them was re-enacted. The children of preachers were to be supported by the circuits on which their fathers laboured. An illustration of the financial condition of the ministry is afforded by the fact that only twelve pounds a-year were allowed for a preacher's wife, and four pounds for each of his children; and the latter sum was to be paid for boys only till their eighth year, when they were to be sent to Kingswood school; and for girls till their fourteenth year, after which no provision was yet made for them.

To prevent scandal, it was enacted that in all cases of insolvency among members of the societies, a committee should examine their accounts, and bankrupts were to be immediately "expelled," if their failure should be seen to have occurred from any unjust cause.

* Myles's Chronological History, etc., chap. 5.

While the Minutes showed an increase of members, ten circuits reported a decrease. It was therefore urgently asked: "What can be done to revive the work of God where it has decayed?" And the preachers pledged themselves anew to pastoral diligence, visiting from house to house, to increased care of the religious training of the children of their societies, to field preaching, early morning services, and the circulation of religious books.

This session was memorable for the occasion which it gave for the revival of the Calvinistic controversy. No man of his age had clearer views of the great doctrine of the Reformation—Justification by Faith—than John Wesley. But he knew its liability to Antinomian abuse. As early as 1738 he guarded it against this perversion, with no little emphasis, in his sermon before the University of Oxford, and in his first Conference he admonished his preachers against it. At that session (1744) it was declared that they had "leaned too much towards Calvinism." He believed that the Calvinism of his day tended to Antinomianism, and the "leaning towards Calvinism," to which he objected, was such a representation of the relation of works to faith as tended to supersede the former by the latter. The doctrine of the "imputation of Christ's righteousness," upon which American Calvinists have in latter years very largely adopted his opinions, was particularly, as he thought, abused by contemporary Calvinists, and the theological world owes him no small obligation for the discrimination with which he guarded the Methodistic movement against this Antinomian tendency.

The Minute on the question at the present Conference was not designed as a popular view of the subject; it was liable itself to abuse in that respect; but as a brief, dogmatic statement, made for his preachers as students of theology, it is safe and Scriptural. It produced the most violent theological controversy known in the history of Methodism, in which Shirley, Toplady, Hill, Fletcher, and Olivers were the champions. It has tended, more than any other occasion for a hundred years, to fortify evangelical Arminianism in the Protestant world. It forecasts, perhaps irrevocably, the theological character of Methodism, and, by Arminian Methodists, at least, must be considered one of those special providences which have developed and determined its history. As this memorable controversy did not take place till the next Conference, and forms one of the most interesting facts in our narrative, the Minute which produced it will be given at that period.

CHAPTER VII.

CALVINISTIC METHODISM FROM 1760 TO 1770.

Mutual Relations of the Calvinistic Methodist Societies—Position of the Countess of Huntingdon—She itinerates with her Preachers in Yorkshire —They attend Wesley's Conference—Venn—Grimshaw—Fletcher—Sketch of Captain Scott—Adventures of Captain Joss—The Countess and her Preachers at Cheltenham—Lord Dartmouth—A great "Field Day"—"Quadruple Alliance" between the Wesleys and Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon—Trevecca College—Expulsion of Methodist Students from Oxford—Scenes at Trevecca—Whitefield's Declining Health—He again Visits America—Returns to England in 1765—Last Interviews with Wesley—Last Voyage to America—Happiness of his Religious Frame as he approached his End—His Excursion up the Hudson—Last Sermon—Character—Results.

It would be difficult if not impossible to define the mutual relations of the Calvinistic Methodist societies. Calvinism has always tended, by some occult law, to ecclesiastical independence, and has thereby favoured freedom of thought rather than effectiveness of organization. Whitefield and Howell Harris were the apostles of Calvinistic Methodism; Romaine, Madan, Venn, and Berridge, their coadjutors; the Countess of Huntingdon was their most important centre of union. Her good sense, the influence of her social position as a member of the British aristocracy (an important consideration to the English mind), and still more, her munificence, upon which most of the Calvinistic chapels were more or less dependent, enabled her to centralize their sympathies around her own person, and she never abused the moral power which she thus commanded. No formal conferences were held; few, if indeed any, representative consultations were had; but the Calvinistic evangelists naturally resorted to her house for counsel with each other, and always with her. Most of their leaders were her chaplains, a fact which gave her a paramount influence. Severely practical, and never whimsical in her judgments, she added to her other sources of power a moral authority to which all reverently deferred.

While really directing the whole Calvinistic movement of Methodism, she never transcended what was deemed the propriety of her sex by any activity in the public assemblies of her societies. She often "itinerated" among them, but was always accompanied, not by Whitefield, for his movements were too rapid for her, but by Harris, Romaine, Venn, Fletcher, or Madan, they preaching,

while she maintained her womanly decorum as a hearer, planning their labours and counselling the societies privately.

Her excursions among them were frequent during the present period. In 1760 she went into Yorkshire with Romaine and Venn, and was joined there by Whitefield.* One object of their visit was to harmonize the distracted societies of Ingham. In 1762 she again visited that county, and, with Venn, Romaine, Madan, and Whitefield, was present at the Conference at Leeds. Their attendance seems to have been purely one of courtesy and Christian fellowship. No dissentient opinion disturbed the deliberations; Wesley expressed in his Journal thankfulness to God for "His gracious presence, which attended it from the beginning." The occasion must have been one of deep interest, presenting, as it did, an imposing representation of the whole Methodist movement, in the persons of most of its great leaders, and crowded by an unusual attendance of local preachers, class-leaders, and stewards.

After the session Whitefield went to Scotland, rousing the towns and villages in his course. The Countess hastened to Knaresborough, where she had frequent meetings with the evangelical clergy of the shire, inspiriting them to more energetic labours. Romaine continued with her, preaching daily and with powerful effect. Venn, who had charge of the parish of Huddersfield, wrote to her, after her departure, with an overflowing heart, respecting the "light and life" which her visit had spread among the Yorkshire churches. The catholic-minded Grimshaw, who was evangelically the archbishop of Yorkshire, and was now about to depart to the Church triumphant, rejoiced to see any new labourer enter his great Methodist diocese. He wrote to the Countess, after her visit, that the "Lord's work prospers amazingly among us," and that the societies were everywhere in a good state. So pure at this time was the charity, so fervent the zeal of both classes of Methodists, that it was indeed difficult for either themselves or their enemies to distinguish between them. Grimshaw wrote, with a sort of rapture, of the blessings showered by the Lord upon them all while the Countess and her chaplains were in Yorkshire. "How," he says, "did our hearts burn within us to proclaim His love and grace to perishing sinners. Come and animate us afresh; aid us by your counsels and your prayers; and stir us up to renewed activity in the cause of God. All the dear apostles go on well; all pray for your dear ladyship, and all long for your coming among us again." He had been, he con-

* Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, chap. 17.

tinues, a "long round" since she was with them, and had seen Ingham, Venn, Conyers, and Bentley, "all alive and preaching Christ crucified with wonderful success." Nelson, Grimshaw, Ingham, and Venn had kindled a flame of Christian charity and zeal in Yorkshire which still glows over their graves. Not only these early and beautiful examples of religious fellowship, but the abiding results of Methodism in that region are among its best vindications.

Fletcher proposed, at the next visit of the Countess to Yorkshire, to accompany her to that "Goshen of the land, to learn the love of Christ at the feet of his brethren and fathers there." She was also attended by Whitefield, Venn, Howell Harris, Townsend, Dr. Conyers, and Lady Anne Erskine, daughter of Lord Buchan; and Madan joined them afterwards. They had public worship twice a-day, Fletcher being the chief preacher, as Whitefield left them early for Wales. They paused at Venn's parish, in Huddersfield, where Fletcher preached twice to large congregations, and with manifest effect. They also entered the parish of Grimshaw, who had now gone to his rest. Fletcher and Townsend addressed thousands there who had assembled from the towns and villages round about. Madan, Fletcher, and Venn, assisted by several Yorkshire clergymen, preached incessantly for some weeks, not only in that county, but in the adjacent shires, to vast multitudes. It was, in fine, a religious jubilee throughout that part of England. Whitefield again joined them, and spread widely the public interest. The Churches were quickened, hundreds, if not thousands, of hearers were awakened, and the whole region aroused.

Two interesting laymen, one a military man, Captain Jonathan Scott, and the other a mariner, Captain Torial Joss, were conspicuous among the Calvinistic labourers about this time. The former was with the catholic band in Yorkshire, where he preached with great usefulness and popularity. Whitefield had said of them that God, who sitteth upon the flood, can bring "a shark from the ocean and a lion from the forest, and make them to show forth His praise." Methodism hesitated not to use any talent which Providence thrust in its way, though it took good caution against eccentricities which were not well guarded by prudence and piety. Both these remarkable men became powerful labourers in its field, and never betrayed its confidence. Their personal histories are striking illustrations of the manner in which the Methodistic revival reached all classes of men, and turned to account all kinds of talent.

Captain Scott was descended from an ancient and opulent family in the county of Salop. He was well educated, and in his seventeenth year adopted a military life as a cornet, but was soon promoted to the rank of captain of dragoons. He fought in the battle of Minden in 1759. Of vivid temperament, courageous and ambitious, he was, nevertheless, addicted to religious reflection, and in the midst of battle saw the folly of bravery itself, when it is without moral fitness for its perilous contingencies. He desired to be a genuine Christian, but knew not the power of faith as "the victory which overcometh the world." He read punctiliously the Psalms and Lessons of the Liturgy, and his fellow-officers usually accosted him with the pleasantry, "Well, Scott, have you read your Psalms and Lessons to-day?" Persisting, against the banter of his comrades, in these honest attempts to make himself righteous, he felt, nevertheless, from day to day, that he had no success. While quartered near Oathall, he was overtaken, on a shooting excursion, by a storm that drove him into a farm-house, the humble tenant of which was a Methodist, and conversed with such good sense on religious subjects that Scott inquired where he had got his information. Pointing to a neighbouring hall, the farmer replied that a famous man, Mr. Romaine, was now preaching there. The next Sunday the officer was present, and was struck by the devout order of the assembly, but still more by the text, "*I am the way.*" It was precisely what he needed, and led him at last to a saving faith in Christ.

During some time he remained in the army, but while in Leicester with his regiment he began openly to preach to his men. A good but eccentric man having observed his ability and usefulness, one day shut him in an apartment alone with his God, a Bible, and a hymn-book, and declared that he must inevitably preach there that evening. He did so, and thus took his commission as an ambassador of Christ. From this hour he never swerved, but zealously preached in his regimentals wherever he moved with his troops. The novelty of the sight of a military officer preaching in costume excited the liveliest interest among the common people. Nearly all Leeds turned out to hear him, and he addressed "amazing crowds." Wherever he laboured with Lady Huntingdon's clerical attendants, during her present visit to Yorkshire, he was a centre of attraction to the multitude. He accompanied the Countess to Madeley, where, as he could not canonically occupy the church, he preached, at the invitation of Fletcher, twice on Sunday from the horse-block at its door to an immense assembly, and the next day in Madeley Woods to a still larger

concourse. Fletcher wrote of him as "a captain of the truth, a bold soldier of Jesus Christ. God had thrown down before him the middle wall of bigotry, and he had boldly launched into an irregular usefulness. For some months he had exhorted his dragoons daily, for some weeks he had preached publicly at Leicester, in the Methodist meeting-house, in his regimentals, to numerous congregations with good success." "The stiff regular ones pursue him," he adds, "with hue and cry, but I believe he is quite beyond their reach. I believe his *red coat* will shame many a black one. I am sure he shames me."

Whitefield could not but rejoice in such a fellow-labourer. He gave a public account of him in London. "I have invited the captain," he added, "to bring his artillery to the Tabernacle rampart, and try what execution he can do here." Scott went to the metropolis, and a great assembly welcomed him in the Tabernacle. The brave man's heart melted as he rose before them; he burst into tears, and lost the control of his voice; but recovering his composure, he delivered a discourse which produced a lasting impression, and rendered him thenceforth one of the most popular preachers of the city. He sacrificed for the Gospel flattering prospects in the army, sold his commission, and gave himself to the Christian ministry. During more than twenty years he was one of the most successful supplies of Whitefield's Tabernacle, and went to and fro through the country preaching in both Calvinistic and Arminian chapels.

Captain Joss was another example of the Methodistic spirit of the times. He was an energetic Scotchman, and trained to maritime life. He was early inclined to religion, but being discouraged at home, he hid his Bible out of the house, and reading it clandestinely, received from it impressions which he never lost. He was sent to sea when quite young; it was at a time of war, and being taken by the enemy, he was carried to a foreign port, and suffered a severe imprisonment. Returning to Scotland during the Stuart rebellion, he was immediately impressed, and sent on board an English ship of war. He made his escape, and connected himself with a coasting vessel which belonged to Robin Hood's Bay, in Yorkshire. Wesley records, in his Journal, frequent visits to this place, where he preached in the market-square and on the quay, till he succeeded in founding a society. Joss, who had strictly maintained his morals, and even his religious scrupulousness, in all his adventures, and had been a diligent student during the winter suspensions of navigation, joined the Methodists, and became noted in the town for the ability of his

exhortations. Wesley discerned his talents, and encouraged him. He retained his Scotch Calvinism, but, as he did not dispute about it, it was no obstacle among his brethren.

Still pursuing his seafaring life, he preached on board his vessel, and became known as an evangelist in all the harbours which he frequented. His first regular sermon was delivered at Boston, Lincolnshire, where he produced an extraordinary impression. On being appointed to the command of a ship, he established regular worship among his crew, and became at once captain and chaplain, and soon trained a band of his converted tars to exhort and pray publicly.

He was a good sailor, and had accumulated enough property to become owner, in part, of his ship, with a fair prospect of wealth; but now disasters beset him continually, as if providentially to drive him from the seas. He made unfortunate voyages, and was repeatedly wrecked. At one time he lost his ship, and with difficulty saved himself and his crew; but, courageous against all odds, he went to Berwick for the purpose of building a still larger vessel. While there he preached to great crowds, and, when about to leave, the common people mourned as at the loss of a faithful pastor. After he had sailed, a friend wrote, without his knowledge, to London, respecting his successful labours in Berwick during the preceding nine months. The letter came under Whitefield's eye, and when he heard of the arrival of the preaching captain in the Downs, he announced in his Tabernacle that Joss would preach there the next Saturday evening, and despatched a messenger to the ship, which had already received among sailors the name of "The Pulpit," to summon him to London. His modesty was startled at the unexpected honour, and he refused to go; but the messenger would not leave the deck till he consented. Amid wondering throngs the sailor proclaimed the Gospel from Whitefield's pulpit, not only on Saturday but on Sunday; and Whitefield insisted that he should at once abandon the chart and compass, and give himself wholly to the ministry. He shrank from the proposition, but on his next voyage met with an accident which Whitefield deemed a warning. On his return to London, still greater crowds gathered to hear him. Whitefield again urged him to confine himself to preaching, but he again resisted the call, and his following voyage was attended with a still worse disaster. On his third arrival at London, his word was heard by yet greater throngs, and with still greater effect. While in the city his brother, a pious young man, fell overboard and was drowned in the Thames. "Sir," said White-

field, "all these disasters are the fruits of your disobedience, and let me tell you, that if you still refuse to hearken to the call of God, both you and your ship will soon go to the bottom." He yielded at last, and after his fourth voyage gave up the deck and took the pulpit. In 1766, Whitefield had the happiness to recognize him as his colleague at the Tabernacle and Tottenham Court Road, and Captain Joss became the Rev. Torial Joss, of famous memory in the religious history of the times.

During thirty years he was Whitefield's associate pastor of the London Calvinistic Methodist societies, and his popularity was only second to that of Whitefield himself. The crowd ran after him, and his word, delivered with great native eloquence, was successful in the conversion of multitudes of souls. Berridge called him "Whitefield's Archdeacon of Tottenham." He not only spread Methodism extensively in the metropolis, but made preaching excursions into the country. He usually spent four or five months of each year in itinerating in England and Wales. The Welsh especially delighted in his simple eloquence. Many came twenty miles on foot to hear him, and wherever he went he left seals of his ministry. He was a good man, mighty in the Scriptures, and faithful to the end. After preaching the Gospel more than thirty years, he was smitten down by sudden disease. "Oh, the preciousness of faith!" he exclaimed to the groups around his death-bed. "I have finished my course. My pilgrimage is ended. Oh, thou Friend of sinners, take thy poor old friend home!" As if rapt in visions of the celestial world, he at last uttered the word "Archangels," and expired.*

Thus did Methodism gather its trophies from the sea and the land, and while the "regular" clergy treated with scorn its "irregularities," and bishops wrote diatribes against its "enthusiasm," but failed to save the heathen masses around them, it went forward, redeeming the people.

In 1768 the Countess of Huntingdon made excursions into Gloucestershire and neighbouring counties, attended by a corps of regular and irregular preachers, whose ministry spread a great sensation throughout their course. "A remarkable power from on high," wrote the Countess, "accompanied the message of His servants, and many felt the arrows of distress."† Shirley, Romaine, Madan, Venn, and Maddock were with her, and Whitefield joined them at Cheltenham. They preached in the churches when they could obtain permission; when it was denied they

* Gillies's Whitefield, ch. 19; Life, etc., of Lady Huntingdon, ch. 12.

† Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, chap. 25.

betook themselves to Methodist and Dissenting chapels, to churchyards, to highways, and fields. At Cheltenham the church was refused them by its rector and wardens, but Lord Dartmouth, noted as a Methodist himself, opened his mansion for them. Downing, his chaplain, was a Methodist evangelist, and had done much good in the neighbourhood. His lordship hoped to obtain the church for Whitefield, but when the latter arrived it was denied to him also. An immense assembly had been attracted by the fame of the preacher and the exertions of the earl; finding the church door closed, Whitefield mounted a tombstone and cried aloud, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!" A singular spectacle was it—the closed church, the graves covered with thousands of the people, and such churchmen as Venn, Madan, Shirley, Maddock, Talbot, Rowlands, and Whitefield, ordained and gowned, and yet proscribed for preaching to the famishing multitudes the doctrines of the Anglican Reformation; and this, too, while a peer of the realm, a nobleman distinguished for his wealth and dignity, admired by the king, the first Lord of Trade, sworn of the Privy Council, and Principal Secretary of State for the American Department, stood with his family among them, their friend and patron.* Such was the treatment of Methodism by the Established Church of the land.

Venn spoke of this "field day," and those which immediately ensued, as remarkable for interest and success beyond what his "powers could describe." He says he was overwhelmed by a sense of the awful power and presence of Jehovah; that the effect of Whitefield's discourse was so irresistible that some of the hearers fell prostrate upon the graves, others sobbed aloud, some wept in silence, and almost the whole assembly seemed struck with awe. When the preacher came to the application of his text to the ungodly, "his word cut like a sword." Many cried out with anguish. At this juncture Whitefield made an "awful pause" of a few seconds, then burst into a flood of tears. Madan and Venn stood up during this short interval, and exhorted

* America still respects the name of the noble Methodist at the college (Dartmouth, Hanover, N.H.) which he patronized. It was to him that Cowper alluded in the verses:

> "We boast some rich ones whom the Gospel sways,
> And one who wears a coronet and prays."

"They call my Lord Dartmouth an enthusiast," said George III.; "but surely he says nothing on religion but what any Christian may and ought to say." There was a vein of outright good sense running through the insanity of the aged king.

the people to restrain as much as possible their emotions. Twice afterwards they had to repeat the same advice. "Oh with what eloquence," writes Venn, "what energy, what melting tenderness did Whitefield beseech sinners to be reconciled to God, to come to Him for life everlasting, and rest their weary souls in Christ the Saviour." When the sermon was ended the people seemed spell-bound to the ground. Madan, Talbot, Downing, and Venn found ample employment in endeavouring to comfort those who had broken down under a sense of guilt. They separated in different directions among the crowd, and each was quickly surrounded by an attentive audience still eager to hear the Word of Life.

Turned away from the church, the evangelists found shelter at Lord Dartmouth's mansion. Whitefield administered the sacrament there the same evening. Talbot "exhorted," and Venn closed the day with prayer and thanksgiving. The next day was equally interesting. Whitefield addressed "a prodigious congregation" in the churchyard, and Talbot preached at night at the earl's residence, where all the rooms and the adjacent grounds were crowded. A table was brought out before the door, and Whitefield mounting it, again addressed them with overwhelming effect. Intelligence of these extraordinary scenes soon spread abroad, and the next day Charles Wesley, and many Methodists from Bristol, Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Rodborough, and their adjacent villages, arrived and shared in the Pentecost; but all "loud weeping and piercing cries had subsided, and the work of conversion went on, and much solid good was done."

On leaving Cheltenham Madan and Talbot itinerated through Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, and Northamptonshire. "They went," says Hervey, who met them, "like men baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire," and through all those regions, as well as Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, they sounded the alarm day and night, and woke up slumbering thousands. These proceedings seemed, indeed, disorderly to grave Churchmen, but Whitefield expressed the just view of them: "This order undoes us. As things now stand we must be disorderly or useless."

It is supposed that there were about forty clergymen of the Establishment publicly known about this period as "Evangelical."* Wesley had tried in vain to introduce among them some plan of co-operation which should not compromise their opinions. With Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon he had better success. He frequently met them in London, and preached at the residence of the Countess amid throngs not only of the aristocracy,

* Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, chap. 27.

but of the Calvinistic Methodist ministers; he occupied their pulpits, also, in his travels through the country. About 1766 the Countess, Whitefield, and the two Wesleys cemented their Christian harmony by something like a formal, "a quadruple alliance," as Charles Wesley called it.* They agreed to meet as often as convenient, and co-operate in their common work.

Lady Huntingdon prized highly Wesley's counsels. She could not fail to perceive his peculiar ability as an ecclesiastical administrator, and, more than any other leader of Calvinistic Methodism, shared his legislative and executive genius; but her sex did not admit of its exertion to the extent needed by her societies. She consulted him often on important occasions. In 1767 she submitted to him, and also to Venn, Romaine, and her other conspicuous associates, a plan for the education of preachers, from which arose her Trevecca College. Wesley heartily approved the scheme; it was, in fact, the exemplification of a design which he himself had propounded in his first and second Conferences.

A provision of this kind was the more needed as it had become manifest that the Methodists could expect no treatment, compatible with their self-respect, for their ministerial candidates at the English universities. About the time that Lady Huntingdon and Wesley were consulting respecting Trevecca, a conclusive motive for the project was given at Oxford. Methodism had again revealed itself within its learned cloisters, as also at Cambridge; in the latter, the noted Rowland Hill headed a band of devout youth who were stigmatized by the title. At Oxford, Halward, of Worcester College, led a little company who were reproducing "The Holy Club," to the dismay of its clerical and literary dignitaries. Hill and Halward were in constant correspondence; Whitefield, also, had influential relations with them, and the new revival began to assume much prospective importance, when it was summarily arrested by the collegiate authorities at Oxford. Six students of St. Edmund's Hall were cited to trial "for holding Methodistic tenets, and taking upon them to pray, read, and expound the Scriptures in private houses."† Dr. Dixon, Principal of St. Edmund's, defended the accused students from the Thirty-nine Articles, and spoke in the highest terms of

* See his letter (tinged not a little with his characteristic discontent towards his brother) in the Life of Lady Huntingdon, chap. 27.

† St. James's Chronicle. Philip's Whitefield, chap. 27. The principal charges against one of them was that "he had been instructed by Mr. Fletcher, a decided Methodist," and had "associated with Methodists."

their piety and exemplary lives; but his motion for their acquittal was overruled, and they were expelled. The proceeding produced a general sensation in religious circles throughout the country. Sir Richard Hill dedicated to the Earl of Lichfield, Chancellor of the University, a pungent pamphlet, entitled "Pietas Oxoniensis." Horne, afterwards Bishop of Norwich, entered into the controversy in favour of the expelled young men. Macgowan, who had been a local preacher among the Methodists, but was now a Baptist pastor in London, published against the University a satirical sermon, famous in that day, under the title of "The Shaver," which, with Aristophanic humour, but scathing logic, showed the Oxford proceedings to be not only impious but supremely ridiculous; many thousands of the publication flew over the land. Whitefield addressed a published and forcible letter to the Vice-Chancellor. Most, if not all these young men had been sent to Oxford under the auspices of Lady Huntingdon; and the Oxford authorities, as also the public journals, accused her of "seducing young men from their respective trades and avocations and sending them to the University, where they were maintained at her expense, that they might afterwards skulk into orders." It was time, therefore, that Trevecca should be opened. In three months it was dedicated by Whitefield, several of the persecuted students resorted to it, and most of them became useful ministers in the National Church or among the Dissenters.

In August, 1769, a remarkable scene was exhibited at Trevecca. It was the celebration of the first anniversary of the college; and so catholic was yet the whole Methodist movement, that both its Calvinistic and Arminian leaders met there in harmony, and gave an example of Christian charity which should never be forgotten by their successors. Nearly a week before the celebration many of the most distinguished evangelists had arrived, and vast congregations, sermons, exhortations, prayers, and conversions, in the courtyard of the castle, marked these preliminary days. Early in the morning of the anniversary the Eucharist was administered, and shared by Methodists of all opinions. Its administrators were Wesley and Shirley, the exponents of the Calvinism and Arminianism of the day. A large company of clergymen first partook of it, then the students, and afterwards the Countess and a train of "elect ladies," mostly of high rank, followed by the people. Fletcher preached in the court at two o'clock, and was succeeded by a sermon in Welsh, after which all the clergymen dined with Lady Huntingdon, while

bread and meat were distributed from ample baskets to the multitude without. In the afternoon Wesley preached, and Fletcher followed with a second sermon. The evening was devoted to a "love-feast," the primitive Agape, derived, in a simplified form, through the London Moravians; it was an occasion of extraordinary interest; all classes sat "together as in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Howell Harris, with a band of his Welsh converts, took part in the exercises in their own language, and narratives of Christian experience, prayers, and hymns occupied the hours. Wesley, always on the wing, left the next day; but Fletcher, Shirley, and other clergymen tarried several days in brotherly devotions, preaching from a platform in the courtyard to the multitudes who still lingered with them in deep religious interest.

But let us return, and for the last time, to the hero of Calvinistic Methodism. It pleases God, in accommodation to the infirmities of our fallen humanity, that His most eminent servants should not be entirely exempt from its common imperfections, otherwise they could not so well command our common sympathies, and do us the good for which they are sent; but often, as their appointed work is closing, does He put upon their brows an unearthly glory, as if crowning them among men for their admission among angels. Even in private life, when the aged pilgrim, or the long-suffering saint, or sanctified childhood itself, seems preparing to depart, it is often thus; but still more among the good and noted, of public Christian usefulness. Whitefield has appeared and reappeared amid the scenes of our narrative with continually increasing interest—an interest which the historian, while he may well apprehend that he shall be suspected of exaggeration, knows equally well to be short of the original reality. We come now to follow him to his grave, or rather to the scene of his ascension; and as we trace him through his last days, and behold his eloquence, his devotion, his heroism, taking a character of sublimity from the approach of death, we shall find that the ground upon which we tread becomes more holy, and should be walked with unsandalled feet.

We parted from him last in 1760. His health was feeble; the asthma oppressed him, and his chronic hemorrhage, "vomiting of blood," was considered by him a fortunate relief after the excitement of his discourses. In 1761 he was reduced almost to extremity, and expected death. Berridge, Romaine, Madan, and his other associates, had to sustain the services of the Tabernacle and Tottenham Chapel, and for the first time in his ministerial

career he preached not for several weeks. In 1762 he considered it a sign of some improvement that he could resume his "ranging," and preach some "five times a-week." He could "take the open field" occasionally. "Oh for power equal to my will!" he wrote; "I would fly from pole to pole, publishing the everlasting gospel of the Son of God." He made a voyage to Holland for his health this year, and on his return was soon again in Scotland, and could write: "All my old times have returned." Edinburgh, Glasgow, Cambuslang, again rejoiced under his ministrations. On returning to England, it is recorded that he was able to preach "*but once* a-day," in extreme weakness.

In 1763 he was again on the ocean. It was his sixth expedition. At Philadelphia he preached twice a-week, though still very feeble. Forty preachers, of various denominations, who had been regenerated in the American revival, congratulated him on his arrival. He passed through New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, to Boston, welcomed by tens of thousands. At New York he wrote that such a flocking of all ranks he never saw before. At Boston his reception was more cordial than ever. Even Harvard College, which had issued its "testimony" against him, voted him thanks for his Journal and other books, and received him as an ambassador of Christ. On leaving the city for the south, messengers were sent after him; he went back and preached to immense crowds for several weeks.

In his southward tour the whole population on his route seemed swayed with interest. On reaching New York he wrote: "It would astonish you to see above a hundred carriages at every sermon in the New World." Before the end of 1764 he reached his beloved Bethesda, near Savannah, having preached all along his course from Boston to innumerable multitudes.

In the spring of 1765 he again swept over the colonies northward as far as New York. It would be impossible to estimate the influence of his powerful discourses on the Churches, and the religious interests of the Atlantic settlements generally. The population, from the highest to the lowest, gathered at all the prominent points of his passage. Hundreds of thousands heard the highest evangelical truths uttered with an eloquence probably never equalled. Writing from Philadelphia, he says: "All along from Charleston to this place the cry is 'For Christ's sake, stay and preach to us.'"

In July, 1765, he again landed in England. He was still broken in health, but as ardent as ever with the devout enthusiasm which had borne him through unflagging labours for nearly

thirty years. "Oh to end life well!" he wrote on his arrival; "methinks I have now but one river to pass over, and we know of One that can carry us over without being ankle deep." During the ensuing four years he itinerated in England, Scotland, and Wales, repeating his excursions whenever his health rallied sufficiently to allow him to mount his "field-throne," as he called his out-door pulpit. The enthusiasm of the people to hear him increased with the increased fame which years had given him. They gathered by ten thousands and twenty thousands around him, and he speaks of "light and life flying in all directions."

Cornelius Winter, a distinguished Calvinistic Methodist, gives us some glimpses of his more personal life about this period. He was avaricious of time, and his expectations generally went before the ability of his assistants to perform his commands. He was very exact to the time appointed for his meals; a few minutes' delay would be considered a great fault. He was irritable, but soon appeased. Not patient enough one day to receive a reason for his being disappointed under a particular occurrence, he hurt the mind of one who was studious to please him; he discovered it by the tears it occasioned, and, on reflection, he himself burst into tears, saying, "I shall live to be a poor peevish old man, and everybody will be tired of me." He never indulged parties at his table; a select few might now and then breakfast with him, dine with him on a Sunday, or sup with him on a Wednesday night. In the latter indulgence he was scrupulously exact to retire early. In the height of a conversation he would abruptly say, "But we forget ourselves," and rising from his seat, and advancing to the door, add, "Come, gentlemen, it is time for all good folks to be at home." Whether by himself, or having but a second person at his table, it must be spread elegantly, though it presented but a loaf and a cheese. It never presented much variety. A cow-heel was his favourite dish, and he has been known cheerfully to say, "How surprised would the world be if they were to peep upon Dr. Squintum,* and see a cow-heel only upon his table." He was fastidiously neat in his person and everything about him. Not a paper could be out of place or put up irregularly. Every part of the furniture must be in order before he retired to rest. He said he did not think he should die easy if he thought his gloves were out of their place. There was no rest in the house after four in the morning, nor sitting up after ten in the evening. He never made a purchase without paying the money for it imme-

* One of his eyes was defective. See page 62.

diately. He was truly generous, and seldom denied relief. He often dined among his friends, when he usually connected a comprehensive prayer with his thanksgiving at the table, noticing particular cases connected with the family: he never protracted his visit long after dinner. He often appeared tired of popularity, and said he envied the man who could take his choice of food at an eating-house, and pass unnoticed. He apprehended he should not glorify God in his death by any remarkable testimony, and was desirous to die suddenly.

His wife died in 1768; he writes of her with regret, but suffered scarcely an intermission of his labours by the event. His marriage was not as unfortunate as that of John Wesley, nor as fortunate as that of Charles.* If it yielded him no great happiness, it did not interfere with the great work to which everything else had to bend. At the death of his only child, his friends united in the request that he should decline preaching till it was buried; but he preached twice the day after its death, and once the following day, and the bell was tolling for the funeral before he left the pulpit. This was zeal, but not a lack of tenderness, for in a few minutes he was on his knees by the side of the corpse, shedding "many tears, though tears of resignation." The next day he was again in the pulpit. Never was there a man so entirely of one work as Whitefield.

This, his last sojourn in England, was of incalculable advantage to Methodism. He consecrated new chapels, provided by the Countess of Huntingdon; he promoted the success of the college at Trevecca; he stimulated his fellow-labourers, Romaine, Venn, Berridge, Madan, and their associates; he called out Scott, Joss, Rowland Hill, and other extraordinary labourers into his London pulpits, and spread renewed interest through most of the land. Meanwhile his generous spirit, fast ripening for heaven, sought every opportunity of promoting the catholicity of the great revival. He not only attended, and drew his most eminent associates to Wesley's Conferences, but met him often in private interviews. Wesley's equally charitable heart was touched by these Christian courtesies, and by the reminiscences of their long and common labours and sufferings. He saw that his eloquent friend was hastening to his rest, and that the opportunities for such brotherly amenities should be prized as soon to be had no more. In 1769 he records in his Journal that he spent "a

* Winter, who lived in his family, represents it as unhappy. (Winter's Memoirs, by Jay.) Philip (Life of Whitefield, chap. 11) attempts an elaborate and plausible, if not successful defence.

comfortable and profitable hour" with Whitefield "*in calling to mind the former times*," and the manner in which God had prepared them for "a work which it had not entered into their hearts to conceive." Whitefield was at this time sinking fast. Two years earlier Wesley speaks of breakfasting with him, and of his appearing to be "an old, old man, fairly worn out in his Master's service." In February, 1769, he says: "I had one more agreeable conversation with my old friend and fellow-labourer, George Whitefield. His soul appeared to be vigorous still, but his body was sinking apace."

In September, 1769, the mighty apostle was again on the deck for America. He took affectionate leave of Wesley in a farewell letter as he embarked. After a tedious and perilous voyage, he was cheered to find Bethesda in unprecedented prosperity. For about thirty-two years he had cherished it as one of the fondest objects of his life. It was almost clear of debt, with two new wings, each nearly one hundred and fifty feet in length, and smaller buildings in much forwardness, and the whole executed "with taste and in a masterly manner." The governor and council of the colony received him with public ceremonies, and adopted his plans for the re-organization of the institution as a college. He seemed never more contented. "I am happier," he wrote, "than words can express." "O Bethesda! my Bethel! my Peniel; my happiness is inconceivable!" This year he was to die, and it was well that his last days were not to be clouded by an anticipation of the fate which awaited this his favourite project.* He felt a momentary temptation to repose in its tranquil retirement, "but all must give way to gospel ranging, divine employ!" and soon he was again moving northward. Early in the morning on which he started he wrote the prophetic words: "This will prove a sacred year for me at the day of judgment. Hallelujah! Come, Lord, come!"

The last tour befitted his whole religious history. He was in improved health! never did his spirit soar more loftily; never did such frequent ejaculations of zeal and rapture appear in his correspondence. "Hallelujah! hallelujah!" he wrote to England; "let chapel, tabernacle, heaven, and earth resound with hallelujah! I can no more; my heart is too big to speak or add more!" To Charles Wesley he wrote: "I can only sit down and cry, 'What hath God wrought!' My bodily health is much improved, and my soul is on the wing for another gospel

* It was destroyed by fire two or three years later, and scarcely a trace of its ruins remains.

range. Unutterable love! I am lost in wonder and amazement!"

In May he appeared again among the enthusiastic crowds of Philadelphia, preaching twice on Sunday, besides three or four times during the rest of the week. All ranks flocked to hear him, and now even the Episcopal churches were all open to him. The salutary effects of his former labours were everywhere obvious. He made an excursion from the city over a circuit of a hundred and fifty miles, preaching every day. So many doors were open, he wrote, that he knew not which way to turn. He turned finally to New York, where he preached "to congregations larger than ever." He passed up the Hudson River, and made a tour of more than five hundred miles, preaching at Albany, Schenectady, Great Barrington, and many other places. He had reached the New York frontier of that day; for as late as the Revolution the white population west of the Hudson scarcely extended back sixty miles to Cherry Valley, Johnstown, and some scattered settlements in Otsego, Montgomery, and Herkimer counties; and such was still the power of the Indian tribes, that during the war Schenectady itself was likely at one time to become the prominent point of the western boundary of the state. "Oh what new scenes of usefulness are opening in various points of this world," wrote Whitefield, as he returned. He saw the gates of the northwest opening, those mighty gates through which the nations have since been passing, as in grand procession, but he was not to enter there; the everlasting gates were opening for him, and he was hastening towards them. The last entry in his memoranda relates to his labours on this tour up the Hudson: "I heard afterwards that the Word ran and was glorified. Grace! grace!" He had preached with his usual zeal, and at every possible point, in churches, in streets, in fields, and at one time on the coffin of a criminal, beneath the gallows, to thousands of hearers; "Solemn! solemn!" he wrote; "effectual good, I hope, was done. Grace! grace!"

From New York he went to Boston, and wrote in one of his latest letters that never was the Word received with greater eagerness than now, and that all opposition seemed to cease. He passed on to Newbury, where he was attacked with sudden illness; but recovering, he resumed his route to Portsmouth, N.H. During six days he preached there and in the vicinity every day. Returning he addressed a vast assembly in the open air at Exeter. His emotions carried him away, and he prolonged his discourse through two hours. It was an effort of stupendous eloquence—

his last field triumph; the last of that series of mighty sermons which had been resounding like trumpet blasts for thirty-four years over England and America.

He departed the same day for Newburyport, where it was expected he would preach on the morrow. While at supper the pavement in front of the house, and even its hall, were crowded with people, impatient to hear a few words from his eloquent lips; but he was exhausted, and rising from the table, said to one of the clergymen who were with him, "Brother, you must speak to these dear people; I cannot say a word." Taking a candle he hastened towards his bed-room, but before reaching it he was arrested by the suggestion of his own generous heart that he ought not thus to desert the anxious crowd, hungering for the bread of life from his hands. He paused on the stairs to address them. He had preached his last sermon; this was to be his last exhortation. It would seem that some pensive misgiving, some vague presentiment touched his soul with the saddening apprehension that the moments were too precious to be lost in rest; he lingered on the stairway, while the crowd gazed up at him with tearful eyes, as Elisha at the ascending prophet. His voice, never, perhaps, surpassed in its music and pathos, *flowed on until the candle which he held in his hand burned away and went out in its socket!** The next morning he was not, for God had taken him!

He died of an attack of asthma, September 30th, 1770, as the Sabbath sun was rising from the neighbouring sea. The effulgence of the eternal day had risen upon his beneficent, his fervid, his consecrated life. He had slept comfortably till two o'clock in the morning, when he awoke his travelling attendant, and told him that his "asthma was coming on again." His companion recommended him not to preach so often as he had. "I would rather wear out, than rust out," he replied. He had expressed a desire to die suddenly, and now realized his wish. He sat in his bed some time, praying that God would bless his preaching, his Bethesda school, the Tabernacle congregation, and "all connections on the other side of the water." He attempted again to sleep, but could not; he hastened to the window panting for breath. "I am dying," he exclaimed. A physician was called, but could give him no relief. At six o'clock he "fetched one gasp, stretched out his feet, and breathed no more."

While at the dinner-table of Finley, at Princeton, he had re-

* This final scene in his ministry is given in none of his memoirs. It was related by a daughter of the Rev. Mr. Parsons, in whose house he died.

marked: "I shall die silent. It has pleased God to enable me to bear so many testimonies for Him during my life, that He will require none from me when I die." The only words he uttered during his agony were, "I am dying."

Many hundreds followed him to the grave. All the bells of the town were tolled; the flags of the shipping in the harbour were hung at half mast, and mourning guns were fired from their decks. Funeral sermons were preached in the principal cities of America. The magistrates of Georgia assembled in mourning at the State House, and led a procession to hear his funeral sermon at the church, which was hung in black; and it is said that all the cloth suitable for mourning in the stores of the colony was bought up.

The news of his death reached London early in November. The Methodist chapels were hung with mourning drapery. He left Wesley a mourning ring, and had appointed him to preach his funeral sermon. Wesley pronounced the discourse at the Tabernacle, and repeated it at Tottenham Court, Greenwich Tabernacle, Deptford, and elsewhere, remarking in his Journal: "In every place I wish to show all possible respect to the memory of that great and good man." Charles Wesley published an elegy on his death, which does as much credit to his own genius and heart as to the character of his friend.

Whitefield's remains rest beneath the pulpit of the Federal Street Church, Newburyport. A massive marble cenotaph commemorates him near the altar. Many pilgrims visit the venerable church to honour his memory. Passing into an adjacent vestry, the visitor descends, with his guide and lanterns, through a door in the floor into a crypt, and thence, by a side door, into the vault, extending under the pulpit, where, between two ancient pastors of the church, lies the open coffin of the great evangelist. The bare and decaying bones lie upon a slight bed of mould formed of the dust of the body. As the thoughtful spectator gazes upon the full-orbed cranium, or takes it into his hands, many an eager inquiry is startled within him. What thoughts of power and grandeur emanated from this dome of the mind, thoughts that have stirred the depths of hundreds of thousands of souls, and will quicken their immortality! What were the attributes of his character; what the sources of his wonderful power?

Sufficient has already been said, in the course of this volume, to answer somewhat these questions; but we may well pause at the grave of so conspicuous a character in our narrative, the man who was the herald of Methodism, sounding the trumpet before

its march in both hemispheres, and ask again, whence was his unrivalled power?

Whitefield was a man of no great intelligence, and of less learning, but of unquestionable genius; perhaps the greatest known, in the greatest or at least the rarest power of genius—eloquence.

He was born an orator. The qualities of the orator made up his whole genius; they were the first mental manifestations of his childhood, but were pent up in his heart, a magazine of energies, until kindled by the influence of religion, when they broke forth like the fires of a volcano. He was a man of boundless soul. He was a host of generous sympathies; and every sympathy in him was a passion. This was the secret of his eloquence. The Athenian orator said that action is eloquence. Perhaps antiquity has given undue authority to the saying. The pantomime is not eloquent; but strong passion always is, and always would be, had it the expression of neither hand nor feature, but only the tremulous tones of the excited voice coming from an unseen source upon the ear. There is no eloquence without feeling. Even the histrionic orator must feel—not affect to feel, but, by giving himself up to the illusion of reality in ideal scenes, actually feel. Whitefield's whole Christian course showed the prevalence of mighty feelings.

While eloquence is the rarest if not the greatest power of genius, pathos is the greatest if not the rarest power of eloquence. And remarkable, indeed, is the fact that a quality so rare, and therefore so precious, in oratory and literature, should be the most common of the sensibilities of the popular mind, the masses with whom the pulpit orator pre-eminently has to do. The strength of the natural affections, the prevalence of common sufferings among the common people, keep sacred within them the sense of sorrow and of pity even when most other virtues are gone; and the rudest natures usually weep the most readily, as they do the most sincerely.

Precisely in this greatest power of eloquence did Whitefield most excel. His thoughts, his whole mighty soul, flowed in his tears. He paused often in his sermons to weep, the people, meanwhile, sobbing aloud, or sinking to the earth under insupportable emotions.

While pathos, from its relation to the natural affections and to the common sorrows of men, affords to any orator his chief power, from its congeniality with the religious affections—contrition for sin, habitual trust in an atonement made by suffering, sympathy

with erring men and periled souls, and the tenderness which essentially belongs to all religious affections—it is in a special manner the great power of pulpit eloquence; incomparably more so than terror, which, while a less general susceptibility, is related to but a single religious idea. The profound religious feeling of Whitefield was therefore an important element of his pulpit power. There was in him a remarkable combination of the unction from above, the "Holy Ghost and power," with intense natural sensibility. He was "full of faith and the Holy Ghost." In him religion was from the time of his conversion till his death a continual impulse; zeal for the conversion of men an unbroken spell. All his theological opinions, his ideas of sin and holiness, of heaven and hell, were not merely thoughts but sentiments; not speculations, but unquestionable realities. They were appreciated by him as directly as sensible facts are by ordinary men. This vivid spirituality inflamed his entire soul. A spiritual unction seemed to drip down his whole person, like the anointing oil that "went down to the skirts of Aaron's garments." Hervey has left a remarkable testimony to his Christian character. "For my part," he says, "I never beheld so fair a copy of our Lord; such a living image of the Saviour; such exalted delight in God; such enlarged benevolence to man; such a steady faith in the divine promises, and such a fervent zeal for the divine glory; and all this without the least moroseness or extravagance, sweetened with the most engaging cheerfulness, and regulated by all the sobriety of reason and wisdom of Scripture."*

And it is an extraordinary fact that the fervour of his zeal suffered no appreciable abatement throughout his long ministry of thirty-four years; not even the effect which age and disease might naturally have had upon it. His last year showed more zeal, if possible, than any before it; his last sermon, two hours long, in the open air, was more powerful than his first one at Bristol; like the sun, he went down with undiminished force, as majestically as he rose.

He was an enthusiast, doubtless, but in the best sense, and in no sense a fanatic. His whole soul seemed incandescent with a divine fire; yet the most remarkable thing about him, when we consider the natural constitution of his mind, is the perfect good sense with which he prosecuted a career so long, so fervid, and so novel. When he started at Bristol on his ministerial course, or took the open field at Kingswood, a severe prudence would have predicted some signal folly or failure in his life; some peril-

* Gillies's Whitefield, chap. 20.

ous extravagance of opinion or conduct. But what one can be recorded against him; what more than the common and petty defects of the best of men?* Without apparent sagacity, or even usual caution, the simplicity and entire purity of his conscience supplied him with protections which the most consummate wisdom seldom so well affords, and no extravagance can be imputed to him, except a boundless charity and a zeal which enabled him to reach the maximum capacity of his life for labour and travel.

He had not only the soul of eloquence, but also the art. Elocution is not eloquence; a speaker may be eloquent without it; he may have it in perfection, and not be eloquent. But Whitefield, while possessing the moral and intellectual elements of the orator, neglected not the practical principles of the art. It is said that he studied and privately practised the prescribed rules of public speaking. His gestures are reported to have been remarkably appropriate; Franklin, who heard him often, says that each repetition of the same sermon showed a studied improvement, and that several repetitions were necessary to perfect it; Foote and Garrick said that his eloquence advanced up to the fortieth repetition before it reached its full height.† His voice was laboriously cultivated, and became astonishingly effective. Garrick, who delighted to hear him, said that he could make his audience weep or tremble merely by varying his pronunciation of the word Mesopotamia. His style, both of language and gesture, was natural, and it perfectly comported with his strong natural feeling; for though he studied the art of eloquence, he was not artificial. The ornate, the florid style, so commonly received from the pulpit as eloquence, was never used by him. No one studying his genius can conceive for a moment that it was possible for him to use it; he was too much in earnest, too intent on the object before him. His language is always simple and colloquial,

* In even his controversy with Wesley his faults are excusable, if not admirable, on account of the occasions they afterwards afforded for the exercise of the generosity and tenderness of his noble heart. When he was departing on his first American voyage, Wesley admonished him not to go, because of a warning which Wesley had himself received by sortilege. In the Calvinistic controversy Whitefield published the confidential fact; but perhaps no event in his life called forth more magnanimous and affecting expressions of regret and self-condemnation. He says of it, in his reply to Lavington: "For this I have asked both God and him pardon years ago, and although I believe both have forgiven me, yet I believe I shall never be able to forgive myself." Sortilege was not an uncommon folly of that day. See a ludicrous example of it on the part of Berridge, in the Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, chap. 22.

† Philip's Life of Whitfield, etc., chap. 22.

not fitted for books, but, therefore, the better fitted for speech; abounding in abrupt transitions, and strongly idiomatic; such language, in fine, as a sincere man would use in earnestly entreating his neighbour to escape some impending disaster. Though he did not like his reported sermons, they are evidently fac-similes of his style; direct, abrupt, full of local allusions, and presenting scarcely a single ornamented passage, the very speech of the common people. It would appear homely, even meagre, did not the reader supply, in his imagination, the conversational manner, the tears, and the entreating voice of the speaker. It would be folly to say that a more refined style is not appropriate to the pulpit, popular as should be its address; but, let its refinement be what it may, it should have these characteristics of simplicity, point, and colloquial directness. This is the style of true eloquence; ornament pertains to imagination, and imagination belongs to poetry; but poetry and oratory are distinct. Genuine oratory is too earnest to admit of much ornament. Its figures are few and always brief. Its language is the language of the passions, not of the fancy, and the passions never utter themselves in embellished phrases, but always directly, pungently. It is the great mistake of modern oratory, especially in the pulpit, that it confounds eloquence with poetry, but it was never the mistake of this greatest of preachers.

There was a species of humour, or rather popular aptness, in his discourse, which could not fail to interest the common people; for nowhere else can be found more mother-wit, or readier repartee, than in large popular assemblies. Pulpit buffoons, however, can never claim sanction from his example; it is doubtful whether he ever made a congregation laugh; but the oddity of his illustrations, the appositeness of his local or casual allusions, the colloquial familiarity of his address, the hearty "human nature" of his habitual tone of mind, and his abundant anecdotes, kept the compact thousands in an attitude of eager interest and charmed attention. They felt that though he had come down to them from the Mount of Transfiguration, and was shining with its glory, yet he had gone up to it from among themselves, and was still one of them. Through all his unusual forms of expression and surprising illustrations, was heard distinctly the undertone of his pathos and solemn earnestness. Vulgarity was, with him, next impossible to profanity itself. Cornelius Winter, who accompanied him in his last voyage to America, says that sometimes he wept exceedingly, stamped loudly and passionately, and he was frequently so overcome that for a few seconds it seemed

he never could recover; and when he did, nature required some time to compose herself. He hardly ever ended a sermon without weeping more or less. Winter adds that he has known him avail himself of the formality of the judge putting on his black cap to pronounce sentence. With eyes full of tears, and his heart almost too big to admit of speech, he would say, after a momentary pause, "I am now going to put on my *condemning* cap. Sinner, I must do it! I *must* pronounce sentence!" Then, in a strain of tremendous eloquence, he would repeat our Lord's words, "Depart, ye cursed," and not without a powerful description of the nature of that curse. But it was only by hearing him, and by beholding his *attitude and tears*, continues this writer, that any person could conceive of the effect.*

This dramatic power was another of his extraordinary talents. Not only every accent of his voice, remarks Gillies, spoke to the ear, but every feature of his face, every motion of his hands, every gesture spoke to the eye, so that the most thoughtless found their attention involuntarily fixed. Hume reports that once, after a solemn pause, he exclaimed: "The attendant angel is just about to leave the threshold of this sanctuary and ascend to heaven. And shall he ascend and not bear with him the news of one sinner among all this multitude reclaimed from the error of his ways?" To give the greater effect to this exclamation, he stamped with his foot, lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, and cried aloud, "Stop, Gabriel, stop, ere you enter the sacred portals, and yet carry with you the news of one sinner converted to God." "This address," says Hume, "was accompanied with such animated yet natural action, that it surpassed anything I ever saw or heard in any other preacher."

At Lady Huntingdon's he was once illustrating the perils of the sinner who is led on by inadequate views of religion; he drew the picture of a blind beggar, guided along the brink of a deep precipice by a string around the neck of his dog; the dog escapes; the blind man lifts his foot over the precipice—"Heavens! he is gone!" shouted Chesterfield, leaping up before the assembly.†

* Memoirs of Winter, by William Jay.

† The effect of his eloquence on polished or shrewd minds seems to have been as irresistible as on the common people. Franklin's example is well known, but deserves requoting. He went to hear him in Philadelphia: "At this sermon," he says, "there was also one of our club, who, being of my sentiments respecting the building in Georgia, and suspecting a collection might be intended, had, by precaution, emptied his pockets before he came from home;

As though it were no difficult matter, remarks Winter, "to catch the sound of the Saviour praying, he would exclaim: 'Hark! hark! do not you hear Him?' You may suppose that as this occurred frequently, the efficacy of it was destroyed; but, no. Though we often knew what was coming, it was as new to us as though we had never heard it before. That beautiful apostrophe, used by the prophet Jeremiah, 'O earth, earth, earth, hear the words of the Lord,' was very subservient to him, and never used impertinently."

Newton, of Olney, said: "As a preacher, if any man were to ask me who was the second I ever had heard, I should be at some loss; but in regard to the first, Mr. Whitefield exceeded so far every other man of my time that I should be at none. He was the original of popular preaching, and all our popular ministers are only his copies."*

Such was the man; the results of his influence on his age and ours it would be impossible to estimate, not only because he did not give them any aggregate form by the general organization of societies, but because of their great extent. It has been shown that he led the Methodistic movement over the first barriers in its way, and by field and itinerant preaching broke open for it an unrestricted career. While in England he was almost as ubiquitous as Wesley, and in scarcely any part of the island did he fail to give impulse and energy to that evangelical reanimation which continues to our day. Writers who are not Methodists admit that Methodism saved the Nonconformity of England,† and Whitefield was its chief representative, and promoter among the Nonconformists. The whole evangelical Dissent of England feels his power to-day.

In Scotland, where his fellow-labourers in the revival had but slight agency, and where the Established Kirk was spiritually dead, and the zeal of the Seceders was more the result of tenacity for opinions than of spiritual fervour, he may be considered the first great agent of that resuscitation of religion which, since the date of Methodism, has effectually counteracted the Socinian and

towards the conclusion of the discourse, however, he felt a strong inclination to give, and applied to a neighbour, who stood near him, to lend him some money for the purpose. The request was fortunately made to, perhaps, the only man in the company who had the firmness not to be affected by the preacher. His answer was, 'At any other time, friend Hopkinson, I would lend to thee freely, but not now; for thee seems to me to be out of thy right senses.'"

* See his letter in Lady Huntingdon's Life and Times, chap. 7.

† See page 13.

semi-infidel tendencies which were once prevalent there, and has infused new and universal life into its Churches.

Wales is inscribed all over with the signatures of his usefulness. Jones, Harris, and Rowlands had begun its evangelical regeneration, but their labours were disconnected, and, if we except Jones's itinerant schools, without definite scope. Whitefield's Calvinism gave him power in the Principality; he brought the three Welsh evangelists into co-operation with each other, and into communion with Methodism, and thence, in connection with Wesleyan Methodism, has arisen that extraordinary religious progress by which the thirty Dissenting Churches of 1715 have increased to twenty-three hundred; by which a chapel now dots nearly every three square miles of the country, and over a million people, nearly the whole Welsh population, are found attending public worship some part of every Sabbath.*

The Calvinistic Methodists, who had generally recognized in Lady Huntingdon's patronage and superintendence a bond of unity, were resolved, after Whitefield's death, into three sects:— The first was known as Lady Huntingdon's Connection; it observed strictly the liturgical forms of the English Church, and its ministry ceased to itinerate; it possesses in our day about sixty chapels; Cheshunt College, in Hertfordshire, belongs to it, and was substituted for Trevecca, when the lease of the latter expired. The second was called the Tabernacle Connection, or Whitefield Methodists. Some of its churches used the National Liturgy, but many adopted the forms of the Congregational Independents, and most of them have been absorbed by the latter denomination. The third is known as the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists; it has continued to prosper down to our day. Its chapels are found in almost every village in Wales, and are alone equal to more than two-thirds the number belonging to the Establishment. Its first Association was held in 1743; in 1785 it was more thoroughly organized by Rev. Thomas Charles, whose legislative genius has thus perpetuated in effective vigour the usefulness of Griffith Jones, Howell Harris, Daniel Rowlands, and their Calvinistic Methodist coadjutors. According to the official statistics of the British Government respecting Wales, for 1851, there were in the principality—Calvinistic Methodists, 52,670 communicants, 462 preachers, and 794 churches; Wesleyan Methodists, 19,014 communicants, 424 preachers, and 400 churches.

The extent of Whitefield's influence in America is still less appreciable, but perhaps still greater. The "Great Awakening"

* See pages 84, 85.

there had commenced before his arrival, but it was comparatively local, and its visible interest at least had mostly subsided. Edwards and some of his ministerial associates were yet praying and writing respecting it in New England; and the Tenneuts, Blairs, Finley, Rowland, and others, were devotedly labouring in detail, in the Middle States, against the moral stupor of the times; but Whitefield's coming at once renewed the revival, and gave it universality if not unity.* He alone of all its promoters represented it in all parts of the country, and at every repeated visit renewed its progress. In the South he was almost its only labourer; his preaching, and especially his volume of sermons, read by Morris,† founded the Presbyterian Church in Virginia; for before that period there was not a Dissenting minister settled in the colony.‡

In the Middle States Whitefield's labours had a profound effect. He was an apostle to Philadelphia; he rallied around him its preachers, and stimulated them by his example. In New Jersey and New York he exerted a similar influence, and the frequent repetition of his visits throughout about thirty years did not allow the evangelical interest of the Churches to subside. The ministers in the Synod of New York more than tripled in seven years after his first visit.§ In New England the effect of Edwards's labours were reproduced and rendered general by Whitefield's frequent passages. One hundred and fifty Congregational churches were founded in less than twenty years;‖ and it has been estimated that between thirty thousand and forty thousand souls were converted in New England alone.¶

The effects of the great revival, of which he had thus become the ostensible representative, have been profound and permanent. In fine, the Protestantism of the United States has taken its subsequent character from it, and the "Holy Club" at Oxford may be recognized as historically connected with the evangelical Christianity of all this continent, not only by the later influence of Arminian Methodism, but still more variously, if not more

* For an account of the schisms and other troubles of the American Churches about this time, see Tracy's Great Awakening, etc., *passim.*

† See page 227.

‡ Letter of President Davies to Rev. Mr. Bellamy, now in the Old South Church Library, Boston; see Tracy's Great Awakening, chap. 19.

§ Tracy's Great Awakening, chap. 19.

‖ Such was the estimate of President Styles. See Tracy, chap. 20.

¶ Trumbull (History of Connecticut) gives this estimate for only two or three years; others place the number at fifty thousand. Any such numerical estimates can be of little importance.

intimately, by the agency of Calvinistic Methodism. Wesley's charitable prediction that the breach between him and Whitefield, on account of Calvinism, would be a providential blessing, stands verified throughout the American Republic.

The effect of the awakening on the character of the ministry was one of its greatest results. Since that period the "evangelical" character of the American pastorate has not, as before, been exceptional, but general. Twenty clergymen in the vicinity of Boston alone acknowledged, as we have seen, to Whitefield, at his third visit, that he had been the means of their conversion.

The Baptist denomination in the colonies received new energy from the "Great Awakening." Benjamin Randall was converted through the last sermons and death of Whitefield,* and soon after founded the Free-will Baptist Church, now fifty thousand strong, in the United States.

Whitefield's labours prepared the way for Wesley's itinerants. They had arrived before his last visit; he gave them his blessing, as he passed through Philadelphia, and it has never failed them.

The revival had a salutary effect on education. It gave origin to Princeton College and its distinguished Theological Seminary,† and also to Dartmouth College. Whitefield's fellow-labourers founded both, and the Methodists of England contributed their money to both.

One of its most important blessings was its influence on the discipline of the Church, and especially on its relation to the State in New England. It banished the "Halfway Covenant," which had filled the eastern Churches with unconverted members; it made personal regeneration a requisite among the qualifications for the Christian ministry, and it introduced that general and profound conviction of the essential spirituality of religion, and the necessary independence of Church and State, which soon after began, and has since completed, the overthrow of all legal connection between the two throughout the country.‡

Thus lived and died, and in the results of his labours lives still and will live for ever, George Whitefield, the "Common Drawer" of the Bristol Inn, the "Poor Scholar," or Servitor of Pembroke College, the "Methodist" of the Holy Club of Oxford, and the "Prince of Preachers." In proportion as the historian

* "The death of Whitefield slew Randall," says a late writer. (Christian Review, April 1858.) The last sermons of Whitefield, at Portsmouth, N. H., impressed him deeply; but the death of the great preacher sealed the impression, and resulted in his conversion.

† Tracy's Great Awakening, chap. 20. ‡ Ibid.

of his times should, by the soberest study of facts, approximate an exact estimate of his life and its consequences, would he incur the suspicion of exaggeration. It is not only questionable whether any other one man ever addressed by the voice so many of his fellow-men, but whether any other ever swayed them more irresistibly. It has been estimated that he preached eighteen thousand sermons, which would be ten a-week for the thirty-four years of his ministry. He crossed the Atlantic thirteen times. The preaching tours he made through the colonies, from Maine to Georgia, would, with our modern means of travel, signalize before the country any clergyman's life; but the inconvenience and labour which they then involved can scarcely now be conceived. He has the grand distinction of having travelled more extensively for the gospel, preached it oftener, and preached it more eloquently, than any other man, ancient or modern, within the same limits of life. A nobler eulogy could not crown his memory.

And here we may appropriately drop the curtain on the first act of this extraordinary drama in the modern history of religion. But the paramount man of the great movement was still abroad; a long period of life was yet to be allotted him; he was to survive nearly all his early fellow-labourers; to preach under trees which his own hands had planted at Kingswood, to the second and third generations of his people; and, by his farther labours, to give to Methodism an organic form, which should secure efficiency and perpetuity to its mission. In turning from the grave of Whitefield we shall meet the fullest and noblest life of Wesley.

BOOK V.

FROM THE DEATH OF WHITEFIELD TO THE DEATH OF WESLEY, 1770–1791.

CHAPTER I.

THE CALVINISTIC CONTROVERSY—SKETCHES OF SOME OF ITS WRITERS.

Calvinistic Methodism—Its Influence on the National Church and the Nonconformists—Different Mission of Arminian Methodism—the Champions of the new Controversy—Walter Shirley—His sufferings for Methodism—Richard De Courcy—Whitefield's honourable Scar—Execution of Earl Ferrers—Illustrative Incidents—The Family of Hill, of Hawkestone—Rowland Hill—Sir Richard Hill—Jane Hill—Berridge—Rowland and Sir Richard Hill among the Kingswood Colliers—Characteristics of Rowland Hill—Toplady—The Calvinistic Controversy.

HITHERTO we have been able to trace the Methodist movement as a unit, with but occasional and salutary exceptions. But the time has now come for the line of division to be distinctly drawn.

The Calvinistic, or rather the Augustinian controversy, occasioned by the transference of dogmatic theology into the immeasurable and impracticable field of metaphysics, where the mightiest minds have delved for ages with hardly a single valuable result, was again to agitate and finally to separate the new reformers.

The charitable student of their history will not fail, however, to recognize, amid their polemical strifes, that providential design which has thus far so marvellously marked their progress.

Calvinistic Methodism had well achieved its mission. It had resuscitated the Calvinistic Churches of the American colonies, and endued them with an evangelical energy which not only continues, but grows in our own day.* It was not desirable that it

* See page 369.

should add to their number by organizing itself among them as a separate body, identical with them in theology. Aided by the indirect but powerful influence of its Arminian co-labourers, it had also revived, and thereby saved, the Calvinistic Nonconformity of England.* Its doctrinal peculiarities had attracted to it many kindred thinkers of the National Church—Venn, Romaine, Madan, Newton, Berridge, Conyers, Hervey, Toplady, the Hills of Hawkestone, Townsend, Talbot, and a host of others. In connection with Wesleyan Methodism, it originated that evangelical or Low Church party in the Establishment, which was soon to be represented at Cambridge by Simeon, in Parliament by Wilberforce and Henry Thornton, in the missionary field by Henry Martyn; and in co-operation with it Methodism was about to inaugurate the noblest enterprises of English philanthropy: the British and Foreign Bible Society, first suggested by Charles, of Bala, the Welsh Methodist;† the Religious Tract Society, first exemplified by Wesley, and organized at the suggestion of Burder, in conjunction with Rowland Hill, Matthew Wilks, and other Calvinistic Methodists;‡ the London Missionary Society, which originated in an appeal from Melville Horne,§ who had been from 1784 to 1787, a Wesleyan preacher; the Church Missionary Society, projected by the younger Venn; the Wesleyan Missionary Society, which arose from the labours of Dr. Coke, and which, in its finances and in the number of its foreign converts, stands at the head of similar institutions in Protestant Christendom; the commencement of Religious Periodicals: The "Christian's Magazine" (in 1760), the "Spiritual Magazine" (in 1761), the "Gospel Magazine" (in 1766),‖ the "Arminian Magazine" (in 1778), the "Evangelical Magazine" (in 1793), and the "Christian Observer" (in 1802); the adoption of Sunday Schools promoted in his country societies by Wesley, introduced into the metropolis by Rowland Hill, and

* Isaac Taylor's Wesley and Methodism, page 54.

† Quarterly Review, 1849, Art., Methodism in Wales.

‡ Watson's Wesley, chap. viii. Wesley and Coke really organized the first Tract Society in the Protestant world, in 1782, seventeen years before the "Religious Tract Society." See its plan of organization in a fly leaf annexed to the Arminian Magazine for November 1784, reprinted in Wes. Mag., 1847, page 269. Burder was a Tottenham Court Road convert. Jones's Jubilee Memorial of Rel. Tract Soc., chap. 2.

§ Ellis's History of London Miss. Society, page 12. London, 1844.

‖ "These were the first religious journals published in England."—Southey's Wesley, chap. 27. [The Arminian Magazine was commenced in 1778, not in 1780 as Southey states.—E.E.]

into America by Bishop Asbury;* Negro Emancipation; and the noble fame and deeds of the "good men of Clapham."

The celebrated jurist, Blackstone, had the curiosity, early in the reign of George III., to go from church to church to hear every clergyman of note in London. He assures us that he heard not a single discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero; and that it would have been impossible for him to discover, from what he heard, whether the preacher was a believer in Confucius, in Mohammed, or in Christ.† Romaine had early held a special meeting, "a clergy's litany," to pray for the "peace of the Church, and for all orders and degrees of its ministers." He usually mentioned in his prayers on these occasions the names of all the evangelical clergy whom he knew. The whole number did not at first exceed eight; at this period they could be numbered by scores, and were continually increasing, and before his death he could count more than five hundred.‡

Unlike Arminian Methodism, Calvinistic Methodism had no peculiar features of doctrine or organization which need separate it from its Calvinistic associates among Nonconformists or Churchmen. Completing its peculiar mission to these, it was natural and proper that it should be absorbed into the evangelical Dissenting and Church bodies.

But the Methodist movement had a sublimer providential design than this temporary, though salutary agency. It was to be a perpetual witness for the revived evangelism, and to spread it over the world by its own direct instrumentality, as well as by healthful and continued provocatives to existing religious communities. It needed but one representative or organic form for this purpose.

This providential designation had been growing more and more manifest, throughout the history of Arminian Methodism, by its superior organization and its peculiarities both of doctrine and discipline. And now, by the revival of the Calvinistic controversy, the two parties, thus far comparatively harmonious, were to be put

* [Mr. Raikes began his Sunday School in Gloucester in 1784, and in January 1785, Wesley published an account of it in his Magazine, and exhorted his Societies to imitate the laudable example. Watson's Wesley, chap. 8, note: E.E.] Jones's Life of Hill, chap. 9. Strickland's Life of Asbury, chap 11. New York, 1859. It was suggested to Robert Raikes, by the wife of Rev. Samuel Bradburn, one of Wesley's most noted preachers, (Wes. Mag., 1834, page 319.) She also assisted Raikes in its first organization.

† Article on Johnson in Christian Observer, 1859.

‡ Haweis's Life of Romaine, page 32. Sidney's Life of Rowland Hill, chap. 1.

asunder; the one to finish its work and be mostly absorbed, the other to become not more isolated but more consolidated, and to spread its power over England and America; into France and Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway; to Africa, India, China, the islands of the Pacific and the South Sea; and to assume a form and energy of organization which seem to guarantee it a permanent, if not a general sway in the world.

Whitefield died in the autumn of 1770. Information of the controversy had not, it is probable, crossed the Atlantic to trouble the tranquil evening in which his sun went down with such undimmed brightness. He left behind him strong men, and as strong women, in the ranks of Calvinistic Methodism. Venn, Romaine, Berridge, Haweis, were yet prominent; as also the Countess of Huntingdon, Lady Anne Erskine, who was to be her successor, Lady Glenorchy, her most active female co-labourer, and many other "elect ladies," whose zeal and munificence were for some time to extend its influence in the Establishment and out of it.

Men soon to become conspicuous, especially in the approaching controversy, had been recruited into its ranks during Whitefield's last sojourn in England. Among these were the Hon. and Rev. Walter Shirley, then Rector of Loughrea in Ireland, grandson of Robert first Earl Ferrers. He was a first cousin of the Countess of Huntingdon.* Their families were connected in near degrees of affinity with the ancient royal families of England, both Saxon and Norman, with those of France, Denmark, Arragon, Castile and the Roman empire, and, in fine, with most of the princely houses of Christendom;† honours, however, which will hereafter give them less importance than they derive from their connection with the religious movement of the eighteenth century called Methodism. Young Shirley's visits at Lady Huntingdon's London mansion brought him into intimate relations with the Methodistic leaders of the day. He attributed his spiritual conversion to Venn, and ever after delighted to acknowledge himself his "son in the Gospel." Being already in orders, he became one of Lady Huntingdon's chaplains, and entered courageously into the career which the great Methodists around him had opened.‡ His brethren of the regular clergy united immediately to exclude him from the metro-

* Archdeacon Hill's Letters and Memoirs of Dr. Walter Augustus Shirley, Bishop of Sodor and Man, chap. 1. London, 1849. The bishop was Shirley's grandson, and was a devout and able man. Watson, erroneously, calls Shirley Lady Huntingdon's "brother." Life of Wesley, chap. 11.

† Life, &c. of Lady Huntingdon, vol. i. chap. 1. ‡ Ib., vol. ii. chap. 34.

politan pulpits, and "though carefully conforming to established rules, he became every where the object of reproach."

His curate in Ireland, De Courcy,* also of an ancient and aristocratic family, was soon imbued with the same spirit, and suffered in like manner. He had been invited on one occasion to preach in St. Andrew's, Dublin; but whilst the prayers were being read the pulpit was seized by order of the Metropolitan, for "the cry of Methodism had gone forth," and the unusual sight of crowds of the common people, eager to hear him, was witnessed at the old church. De Courcy thereon withdrew, declaring he would preach in the open air. He mounted a tombstone in the churchyard, delivered his sermon, and thenceforward was known, with his zealous rector, as a Methodist; a devoted, eloquent, and useful one, though denounced by his clerical brethren, and refused licence and priest's orders by his bishop. He hastened to London, where Whitefield exulted to receive him. At their first interview Whitefield, taking off his cap and bending downward, placed his hand "in a deep scar on his head," saying, "This, sir, I got in your country for preaching Christ." Whitefield had a right to boast of the Oxmantown Green exploit, the fiercest encounter with the mob in his history. De Courcy never forgot the heroic allusion.

Shirley had an active intellect, a fervent heart, and an eloquent style. He went forth preaching, with power and great success, at Bath, Brighton, Norwich, and many places in Ireland. A terrible affliction brought him again to London, where he received the sympathies and formed the acquaintance of the Wesleys. His brother, Earl Ferrers, an infidel, a drunkard, and probably a lunatic, had murdered his steward for rendering assistance to his lady, who had been compassionately separated from him by an act of Parliament. The house of Lords condemned the wretched nobleman to death; he was to be executed and his body dissected. His brother and the Countess of Huntingdon, assisted by their Methodist associates, sought in vain to arouse him to a sense of the moral peril of his condition. They visited him and prayed with him in prison; and supplications were offered for him in many of the Methodist chapels. At the instance of Charles Wesley, then in London, he was remembered, not only in public assemblies, but at the sacramental table, and days of fasting and prayer were observed in his behalf. But he seemed incapable of reflecting upon his appalling fate. He spent the evenings of his imprisonment in

* [De Courcy was in his youth a member of one of the Methodist Societies in the south of Ireland. See Wesley's letter to Lady Glenorchy, January 24, 1771.—E.E.]

playing at piquet; he demanded intoxicating drinks; the night before his execution he made one of his keepers read Hamlet while he was in bed, and half an hour before he was carried to the gallows he was employed in correcting verses which he had composed in the Tower. Dressed in his wedding clothes, decked with silver embroidery, he rode to the gallows in his carriage drawn by six horses, and accompanied by troops, and a hearse and six which was to convey his corpse to Surgeons' Hall. He died without penitence, and apparently without fear.

From their religious interest for the condemned nobleman, and his connection with the Huntingdon and Shirley families, so prominently allied with them, the impression of this event upon the Methodist societies was general and profound. It affected the mind of Shirley deeply; he resumed his ministerial labours with augmented zeal, and the acquaintance which it had led him to form with the Wesleys lasted, with advantage to him, till it was interrupted, ten years afterward, by the Calvinistic controversy.

His preaching is described as richly evangelical, and as producing vivid effect. To convert sinners was now his business, and he kept it in view "with singular steadiness during the whole of that stormy period when he was called to exercise his ministry in Ireland." Notwithstanding his high social position, the hostility of his ecclesiastical superiors continued to embarrass him for years; but he met it with fortitude, and sometimes with a magnanimous defiance. Cope, Bishop of Clonfert, warned him to lay aside his "exceptionable doctrines," and threatened to "proceed in the most effectual manner to suppress all such." He answered promptly: "Menaces, my Lord, between gentlemen, are illiberal; but when they cannot be put into execution they are contemptible!" He enumerated his doctrines, and showed that they were not exceptionable. He preached, he says, Justification by Faith alone, the Divinity of Christ, the Trinity, Regeneration, the "full assurance of faith as the privilege of God's believing people, whereby they know that their sins are forgiven them for Christ's sake," the necessity of good works as the fruits of faith. "These," he added, with a firmness which befitted both his religion and his rank, "these, my Lord, are the doctrines which I must and will preach in defiance of the whole world!" He expressed himself, in conclusion, desirous of the friendship of the bishop, while his lordship's conduct toward him should be such as is "due to a gentleman and a minister of Christ; but," he adds, "I see no necessity for submitting to be trampled on by the first man in the kingdom."

A right manly soul had this evangelical clergyman, genuine Irish spirit, rendered the more self respectful by his Methodism; and it is to be regretted that the paucity of our data respecting him will not allow us to give him more befitting space in our narrative. His archbishop, Ryder, of Tuam, knew how to respect him. His bishop, archdeacon, and curate would pick up scraps of his sermons, and go galloping over to the good archbishop with charges of heresy. "Let him alone," the archbishop replied to them; "let him alone; for if you bring him to trial he will appeal to the Articles and Homilies, and with these you can do nothing with him, so let him alone." The archbishop was a good enough theologian and Christian to know that Shirley's Methodism was true to the Church and the Gospel; he was somewhat of a humourist withal, and sometimes treated the charges alleged against the clerical Methodist in a manner the most effectual, perhaps, to silence them. Shirley's enemies annoyed the good prelate with their frequent accusations. The curate of Loughrea was especially zealous against him, going often to Tuam with new specifications; but his Grace perceived the design of this weak-headed backbiter, and effectually stopped him. He arrived once at Tuam with an air of great importance, and a certainty of ruining the intractable Methodist. "O, your Grace," exclaimed the curate, "I have such a circumstance to communicate; one that will astonish you!" "Indeed," replied the archbishop, "and what can it be?" "Why, my lord," rejoined the curate with a solemn air, "he actually wears—*white stockings!*" "Very anti-clerical and very dreadful, indeed!" responded the prelate, with raised eyebrows. The curate was confident he had this time made an impression; he was at the "very pinnacle of self-gratulation." The archbishop, drawing his chair closer to the overweening informer, solemnly asked, "Does Mr. Shirley wear them over his boots?" "No, your Grace," replied the mortified curate. "Well, sir," added the prelate, "the first time you find him with his stockings over his boots pray inform me, and I shall deal accordingly with him." A wise man, this archbishop, and if the Establishment had been governed by more such, Methodism would have done much more good, and the opposition to its spread would have been attended with much less evil.

Here we have illustrations of the vexations, often degenerating into intolerable persecutions, which Methodists of even elevated rank had to endure from the Church in that day. Shirley, co-operating with Houghton, a Wesleyan preacher, one of the company 'presented" with Charles Wesley, by the grand jury at Cork, to

be dealt with as "vagabonds," preached with demonstration and power in Dublin. "You cannot imagine," wrote a correspondent of Lady Huntingdon, "what an uproar has been created" by his preaching. "But O!" added the letter, "what sermons he preached! The doctrine of the sinner's justification by faith without works, the sin and danger of neglecting the salvation of the Gospel, and the great duty of repentance, were enforced with an eloquence and zeal, which cannot but mortify the pride and goad the enmity of those who have never tasted the grace of God in truth. This he is made to feel by rudeness and insult."* The Countess of Huntingdon, noticing his labours at Norwich, exclaims: "His ministry is so faithful, such vivid applications to the conscience, so earnest, so affectionate, so zealous, that many are born again, and will be his joy and crown in the great day! Blessed are the feet that carry the glorious light of the Gospel into the dark corners of the land! Blessed are the lips that proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to the poor, the wretched, and the vicious!" Such are a few glimpses of the character, trials, and labours of the Hon. and Rev. Walter Shirley—illustrations of Methodism and its early times, and some of them grateful reliefs to the less agreeable scenes of the pending controversy, in which we are again to meet him.

Another distinguished family, dating from the times of Edward I., afforded important men not only to the coming controversy, but to the interests of Methodism generally. It was famous, not merely for its long ancestry, but for its old English energy and good-humour, and its sturdy fidelity to the Protestant religion. It had given to London her first Protestant Lord Mayor. It afforded five gallant brothers for the field of Waterloo; and when one of them, elevated to the peerage, and afterward commander-in-chief of the British forces, was received, on his return from the wars, by the citizens of London, to be presented with a sword, another member of the family, a soldier in a better cause, was recognized at his side. "Here comes the good uncle!" shouted the multitude; "three cheers for him!" and the welkin rang with the proud shouts of the throng; for the veteran Methodist, Rowland Hill, was better known to the people of London, and is yet more familiar to the English world, than the hero, Lord Hill.

The Methodistic spirit of the day early penetrated the family at Hawkestone. Richard Hill, afterward Sir Richard Hill, long eminent for his Christian usefulness, devoted himself even to some of the "eccentric labours" of the great revival. In his youth he was

* Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. page 184.

subject to deep religious impressions; he travelled on the Continent, and endeavoured to relieve them by dissipations, but returned more than ever convinced that genuine piety alone could satisfy his awakened conscience. Fletcher, of Madeley, was tutor to the sons of a neighbouring branch of the family; young Hill made his case known to the devoted Methodist in an anonymous letter, and requested an interview with him the same night, at an inn in Shrewsbury. Fletcher walked several miles to meet him, counselled and prayed with him, and thus guided his feet into the path of life. Not long afterward, while preparing for the Lord's Supper, his mind was "overpowered with an ecstatic joy in the Redeemer."* The ministry of Romaine in London, confirmed him in his new faith, and thenceforward he was known as a zealous promoter of the Methodistic movement.

Rowland Hill, full of vigorous health and constitutional good-humour, was also religiously inclined from his youth. While at Eton and Cambridge, where he excelled in his studies, the letters of his brother continually fortified him in the faith. At the university, as we have seen,† he became the leader of an evangelical combination of students, which, allied to a similar company at Oxford, seemed about to reproduce the "Holy Club" that, under the Wesleys and Whitefield, had originated Methodism. The persecutions of the collegiate authorities, and the expulsion of most of the Methodist students, could not damp his ardour.

From the Methodistic correspondence of the times we catch occasional glimpses of a Christian maiden, who walked with God amid the beautiful scenery of Hawkestone.‡ Jane Hill strengthened the faith of her brothers by incessant letters. The extraordinary measures and consequent persecutions of Rowland, at Cambridge, alienated his parents; they deemed the family honour degraded, and for several years treated him with severity, limiting so much his financial allowance that, during most of his early itinerant ministry, he travelled on a Welsh pony given him by a friend, hardly able to pay his expenses, and often knowing not in the morning where to find a resting-place at night. "Cleave only the more closely to Jesus," wrote his faithful sister. His biographers speak with admiration of the gentle, but beneficent influence and meekness of her life, and say that to no one could be better applied the beautiful simile of

* Life of Sir Richard Hill, Bart., by Rev. E. Sidney. London.

† See page 352.

‡ See Life of Sir Richard Hill, Life of Rowland Hill, and Life of Lady Glenorchy.

Jeremy Taylor: "Like a fair taper when she shined to all the room, yet round about her own station she cast a shadow, and shined to every body but herself." She encouraged him to seek the friendship of Lady Huntingdon, and to "stand faithful in the cause of his crucified Master, whether he should be admitted by the bishops as a minister of the Gospel to preach in his name or not."*

During Hill's trials at Cambridge, Berridge, of Everton, who in his wide itinerant circuits sometimes appeared there, amid assembled thousands, in the open field, sought his acquaintance and inspirited him for his work. They were congenial minds. Berridge's irrepressible humour, combined with heroic zeal and the truest piety, seemed a matured example of Hill's own eccentric but devout nature. A portrait remains of the aged vicar of Everton, with a huge wig and an indescribable countenance, in which humour and benevolence seem to contend for the master expression. He was one of the best Greek scholars of his age, and, of course, Aristophanes was his favourite author—that finest example of Attic style and worst example of Attic manners, which the good Byzantine bishop, Chrysostom, the Golden-Mouthed, read on his couch at night, and placed under his pillow when he slept. Berridge's effigy would make an appropriate illustration for the pages of Aristophanes; no great compliment, indeed, but not the less true. He was, in fine, one of those examples of goodness and humour whose very defects please us, and whose infirmities are so much akin to virtues that we would not change them if we could. "I feel my heart go out to you whilst I am writing," he wrote to Hill, "and can embrace you as my second self. How soft and sweet are those silken cords which the dear Redeemer twines and ties about the hearts of his children!" "Go forth wherever you are invited into the devil's territories; carry the Redeemer's standard along with you, and blow the Gospel trumpet boldly, fearing nothing but yourself. If you meet with success, as I trust you will, expect clamour and threats from the world, and a little venom now and then from the children. These bitter herbs make good sauce."† Six students of Oxford were expelled, as we have seen, for their Methodistic labours among private families and in the prison and poor-house of Oxford, and for their association with Venn, Newton, and Fletcher. Sir Richard Hill published his *Pietas Oxoniensis* and *Goliath Slain*, in their defence. A pamphlet war raged on both sides, and the religious community at large was

* Life of Lady Glenorchy, page 89.

† Sidney's Life of Rowland Hill, pages 94, 95: 1861.

stirred with excitement by the controversy.* Six bishops refused Hill ordination. He followed the advice of Berridge, and went forth, wherever the way opened, "into the devil's territories." He preached in prisons, in Dissenting chapels, and on the highways. He was often mobbed; saluted with the beating of pans and shovels, the blowing of horns and ringing of bells; pelted with dirt and eggs, and sometimes in peril of his life. He was once fired at, while in the pulpit, the ball passing over his head. His visits to the paternal home were rendered miserable by the opposition of his parents; but consoled by his devoted sister, he ceased not to preach in all the vicinity; and her gentle influence and charities, aided by his labours and those of his brother, resulted in much local usefulness. Five of the family were soon united with them in the faith, besides some of the household servants and neighbours. In his old age, when his fame was in all the Churches, and indeed in all the English world, he remarked, while walking on the terrace at Hawkestone, to a friend who had noticed the affectionate courtesies of the family towards him, "You see how I am now received here, but in my youth I have often paced this spot bitterly weeping; while by most of the inhabitants of yonder house I was considered as a disgrace to my family. But," he added, while the tears fell down his aged cheeks, "it was for the cause of my God." † His brother, Sir Richard, though not contemplating holy orders, had sometimes laboured as a lay preacher, or exhorter; but believing that as a layman he might be otherwise more useful, he yielded to the entreaties of his parents and abandoned such "irregularities." He was sent by his family to persuade his brother to follow his example. Arriving at Bristol, he was informed that Rowland had gone to Kingswood to preach to the colliers; there he discovered him standing up amid weeping thousands, upon whose blackened cheeks could be seen the traces of their flowing tears. ‡ Rowland saw him in the crowd, and, suspecting his errand, preached with the greater energy and effect. Determined to defeat the design, he concluded by shouting, "My brother, Richard Hill, Esq., will preach here at this time to-morrow." The young man did preach, and "instead of returning with his brother to Hawkestone, became his coadjutor in the very work he designed to persuade him to relinquish."

* [Dr. afterwards Bishop Horne, Dr. Nowell, Dr. Dixon, Mr. Macgowan, and others took part in this controversy.—E.E.]

† Sidney's Rowland Hill, chap. 10, 1861.

‡ Sidney's Rowland Hill, chap. 2.

Bristol, Kingswood, Bath, the hills, woods, and vales of Gloucestershire, were the scenes of his addresses to many thousands, and his extraordinary character and talents soon began to secure general respect. In London he occupied Whitefield's pulpits at the Tabernacle and Tottenham Court Road, and the effect of his sermons there is said to have been "extraordinary in the extreme." Good Captain Joss received into the Tabernacle Church a hundred converts at one time, who had been awakened under Hill's sermons during a visit to the city. "Excepting my beloved and lamented Mr. Whitefield," wrote the Countess of Huntingdon, "I never witnessed any person's preaching wherein there were such displays of the Divine glory and power as in Mr. Hill's."

Opposed by his family, and so poor that Lady Huntingdon and her friends had often to help him, he nevertheless kept the field courageously. He could not fail to be popular. His bearing was dignified and noble, his "voice excellent." Berridge says he had "the accent for a field preacher." * His discourse was often deeply pathetic, but there was also about it that rich and apt humour which always delights the populace, and which characterized so many early Methodist preachers; a result perhaps as much of their hardy, healthful mode of life, their rencounters with all kinds of men, and their unsophisticated habits, as of constitutional predisposition. Berridge delighted in Hill; Grimshaw would have pressed him to his heart; Whitefield could hardly write to him without a strain of "godly wit." Berridge was not afraid of the young preacher's humour; he had hope from that; but feared his discouragement, or his being "lifted up" by popularity. "Fear nothing but yourself," he wrote incessantly; "study not to be a fine preacher; Jerichos are blown down with rams' horns; look simply unto Jesus. . . . S. S. preached at my house during the holidays; he is a wonderful man indeed; somewhat lifted up at present, I think; but his Master will take him by the nose by and by. Make the best of your time, and while the Lord affords travelling health and strong lungs, blow your horn soundly."

Hill's humour was doubtless one of his most popular attractions, and he usually turned it to the best account. He had a remark-

* The droll but pious vicar wrote to Lady Huntingdon: "I find you have got honest Rowland down to Bath: he is a pretty young spaniel, fit for land or water, and has a wonderful yelp. He forsakes father, and mother, and brethren, and gives up all for Jesus; and I believe will prove a useful labourer, if he keeps clear of petticoat snares. The Lord has owned him much at Cambridge and in the North, and I hope will own him more abundantly in the West."—Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, vol. ii. chap. 30.

ably expressive countenance. It is said that every emotion but fear could be indicated by it in an extraordinary degree. His preaching was always direct and inartificial. Sheridan said: "I go to hear Rowland Hill, because his ideas come red-hot from the heart." Milner, the noted Dean of Carlisle, was so affected under one of his discourses that he went to him, exclaiming: "Mr. Hill, Mr. Hill, I *felt* to day. It is this slap-dash preaching, say what they will, that does all the good." Lady Huntingdon called him a "second Whitefield."

His humour doubtless went too far at times; it appeared impossible for him not to perceive the ludicrous side that even the gravest subjects may occasionally present. Lady Huntingdon was his venerated friend, but her active agency in the Methodistic revival seemed to him a sort of female episcopacy, and he failed not, in an unguarded moment of his early ministry, to play off his wit against her feminine apostleship. A woman can forgive any offence but ridicule. The Countess heard of his remarks, and would never pardon them. He and his friends entreated her to receive him into her appointments, but she would not hear them. She wrote in reply to one of them: "Without reserve to you, my kind friend, and with every best wish to dear Mr. Venn, Mr. Hill CANNOT preach *for me*. This must not be pressed." * The Countess was a saint, but she was also a woman. Hill was at this time in the zenith of his popularity; he honoured her ladyship, and always afterward vindicated her extraordinary character; but having now no well-defined relations to her or to Wesley, he projected a plan of independent labours.

After many episcopal repulses he received deacon's orders, but declined ordination as a priest, wishing larger liberty than the Church afforded. He addressed immense assemblies in St. George's Fields, London, and founded the noted Surrey Chapel, in the most depraved district of London, where for half a century he maintained his headquarters, preaching meanwhile in all parts of the United Kingdom, a chief leader in the Methodistic revival. He used the ritual of the national Church at Surrey Chapel, but the pulpit was open to all preachers of the Gospel of any sect or country.†

* Life, etc., vol. ii. chap. 44. The italics are her own.

† Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. *passim*. See also Sidney's Life of Rowland Hill. Three "Lives" of Hill have been published, each representing different party views of his times, and all susceptible of much amendment in this respect. They give the "Calvinistic controversy" with reprehensible partiality.

During his long life no bishop of London was a more important or more useful man in the metropolis.

Augustus Montague Toplady "stands paramount," say his biographers, "in the plenitude of dignity above most of his contemporaries."* He was the staunchest Calvinistic writer of his day, and a preacher of rare eloquence. His sermons were extemporary, and delivered "in strains of unadulterated oratory." The variety of his talents was astonishing; his "voice was melodious;" his manner in the pulpit "singularly engaging and elegant;" no hearer's attention flagged during his discourses, and his sensibilities were so acute that, weeping himself, his audience was often melted into tears. Suffering from pulmonary disease, he prostrated his health by prolonging his studies through most of the night. He sought improvement by removing from his parish in Devonshire to London, where he became associated in ministerial labours with Romaine, Venn, Shirley, Madan, and Hill. He heartily co-operated in the plans of Lady Huntingdon, and made ministerial excursions, with her and her preachers, into Wales and various parts of England. After extensive labours among the Calvinistic Methodists (which were frequently repeated till his death), he settled at last in Orange-street Chapel, London, where we shall again meet him in the approaching controversy.

The news of Whitefield's death seemed only to give a new impulse to these brave and devoted men; but the unhappy, yet in many respects beneficial, Calvinistic controversy now suddenly burst upon them. They were to be its Calvinistic champions. Their connection with that controversy was, however, a comparatively slight fact in their Methodistic history; but as they became prominent about this time, they are here appropriately introduced into our narrative.

* Southey's Wesley, vol. ii. chap. 25.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONTROVERSY.

Wesley's Minute—Moral Tendency of Calvinism—Wesley's Orthodoxy—Benson dismissed from Trevecca—Fletcher resigns its Presidency—The Calvinistic "Circular" against the Minute—Scenes at the Conference of 1771—"Declaration" of the Conference—Fletcher writes his "Checks to Antinomianism"—Shirley's Narrative—Ireland and Thornton—Fletcher proceeds with his "Checks"—Charles Wesley encourages him—Sir Richard and Rowland Hill, Walter Sellon, and Thomas Olivers enter into the Controversy—Sketch of Olivers "the Cobbler"—Toplady among the Combatants—The Controversy rages for six years—Berridge, Hervey, and Madan—Bad Temper of the Writers—Fletcher's Christian Spirit—Value of his Writings—Their Historical Results—Fate of the Combatants—Rowland Hill—Sir Richard Hill—Fletcher at Stoke Newington—Fletcher and Venn in the Mansion of Ireland—An Impromptu Sacrament—Last Glimpse of Shirley—Death of Toplady—Conclusion of the Controversy.

Soon after the adjournment of Wesley's conference of 1770 appeared the Minute on Calvinism, which provoked the new controversy. It declares :—

"We said in 1744, 'We have leaned too much toward Calvinism.' Wherein?

"1. With regard to *man's faithfulness.* Our Lord himself taught us to use the expression. And we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert, on his authority, that if a man is not 'faithful in the unrighteous mammon,' God will not give him the true riches.

"2. With regard to *working for life.* This also our Lord has expressly commanded us. '*Labour,* (Εργαζεσθε,) literally, 'work for the meat that endureth to everlasting life.' And in fact every believer, till he comes to glory, works *for,* as well as *from* life.

"3. We have received it as a maxim, that 'a man is to do nothing in order to justification.' Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God should 'cease from evil, and learn to do well.' Whoever repents, should do 'works meet for repentance.' And if this is not in order to find favour, what does he do them for?

"Review the whole affair.

"1. Who of us is *now* accepted of God? He that now believes in Christ, with a loving, obedient heart.

"2. But who among those who never heard of Christ? He that feareth God, and worketh righteousness according to the light he has.

"3. Is this the same with 'he that is sincere?' Nearly, if not quite.

"4. Is not this 'salvation by works?' Not by the *merit* of works, but by works as a *condition*.

"5. What have we then been disputing about for these thirty years? I am afraid, about words.

"6. As to *merit* itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid: we are rewarded '*according to our works*,' yea, '*because of our works*.' How does this differ from, *for the sake of our works?* And how differs this from *secundùm merita operum*, as our works *deserve?* Can you split this hair? I doubt, I cannot.

"7. The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions is drawn from matter of fact. God does in fact justify those who, by their own confession, neither feared God nor wrought righteousness. Is this an exception to the general rule? It is a doubt whether God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure that the person in question never did fear God and work righteousness? His own saying so is not proof; for we know how all that are convinced of sin undervalue themselves in every respect.

"8. Does not talking of a justified or a sanctified state tend to mislead men, almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, according to our works: according to the whole of our inward tempers and our outward behaviour." *

* Minutes of the Methodist Conferences from the first held in London, by the late Rev. John Wesley, A.M., vol. i. pages 95, 96, London: 1862. Dr. Stevens, in his references to this volume throughout, quotes the edition of 1812, as that of 1862 professes to be an *exact reprint* of the original minutes, I have followed the later, and all the author's references are corrected thereby. I have, however, found many cases in which it has been necessary to correct even the later edition by the former, as a slavish adherence to the text of the original minutes has caused the Editors of the edition of 1862 to omit many matters, stations of preachers, numbers of members in society, &c., which Benson the Editor of the earlier edition must have had some authority for inserting, and which are clearly corrections of the original minutes. It would have added greatly to the value of this edition, if the additions of Benson had been inserted in the form of notes, or otherwise. Of the importance of the omissions, the reader may judge from three instances. In 1778, the whole of the Irish circuits and preachers are omitted in the edition of 1862. In 1789, the whole of the West India appointments are

This document is expressed with Wesley's usual brevity. It is an enumeration of succinct propositions, not designed for popular use, but for his preachers, who were not unaccustomed to theological studies, and who had heard his discussion of its theses in the Conference. Detached propositions were liable to abuse; the Minute, as a whole, might have been better guarded, and doubtless would have been, had Wesley apprehended that it was to be so extensively and polemically discussed.

Its doctrine, as obviously intended, is wholesome and scriptural. Calvinism itself had generally maintained with rigour the obligations of morality and Christian "works;" though contrary, as Wesley believed, to its logical consequences. It is its just boast that, wherever it has swayed a national influence, it has vindicated the morals of Christianity and the rights of man. Switzerland, Scotland, the English "Commonwealth," and Puritan New England, are historical examples. Whether this effect has proceeded indirectly from its severe, its alleged gloomy influence on the popular temper, and by consequence on the popular morals, or from its theological theory; and whether the more intimate influence of the latter, in seasons of religious awakening and inquiry, tends morally and logically to Antinomianism, need not here be discussed; it is sufficient to say that such had been its effect in the Methodistic revival. Wesley had to combat this Antinomian tendency continually; it embarrassed his itinerants throughout the country; some of his own preachers had themselves fallen into the perilous error; * it prevailed among the Moravians, and the sturdiest energy and sense of good John Nelson were tasked to save the societies of Yorkshire from its influence. Wesley had guarded solicitously against it from the outset of his career; he preached against it, as we have seen, while yet at Oxford, and in the Minutes of his first Conference he asserted, "We have leaned," in this respect, "too much towards Calvinism." This declaration, now reproduced, was doubtless the obnoxious

also omitted, both of which appear in Benson's edition of 1812. In the same year (1789), Benson's edition gives the number of members in society, excluding the West Indies, at 70,305; the edition of 1862 gives 56,195. It is true that in both editions the specification of the number of members in the Irish circuits is entirely omitted, but Benson's total clearly includes the number of members in Ireland. The minutes of 1789, in the edition of 1862, thus show a falling off in the number of members of 10,000 in comparison with 1788, and, in comparison with 1790, imply an increase of more than 15,000 in the years, 1789, 1790.—E.E.

* Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 23. Watson's Wesley, chap. 11.

phrase in the Minute, and led to the misinterpretation of the rest of the document.

Arminian Methodism had been spontaneously taking, under the able administration of Wesley, an organized and a powerful form. Calvinistic Methodism, though still mighty in its moral influence, had no such commanding attitude or prospect of permanence; the very organic growth of the one tended to its isolation from the other, notwithstanding their virtual co-operation. It was natural that, in such circumstances, the Calvinistic leaders should feel some jealousy of the influence of the Wesleyan party, especially in respect to doctrinal questions, for which the Calvinistic evangelists cherished an ardent interest, an interest which, it may be gratefully acknowledged, partook more of zeal than of bigotry. Wesley perceived this jealousy, and, with less occasion for it, nevertheless reciprocated it.*

The Calvinistic Methodists had been familiar with Wesley and his writings for more than thirty years; no one, knowing his sentiments, could, without a party bias, have questioned his orthodoxy on that great doctrine of the Reformation, Justification by Faith. In less than three months after the publication of this Minute, he preached the funeral sermon of Whitefield, the great chief of Calvinistic Methodism, in the chapels of Lady Huntingdon, in London, and elsewhere, and never had he more fervently set forth that doctrine than on these crowded occasions.† Extraordinary then

* See his Letter to Fletcher, Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. p. 233; also the Countess's Letter, p. 235.

† He said: "With this point he (Whitefield) and his friends at Oxford, the original Methodists so called, set out. Their grand principle was, there is *no power* by nature, and *no merit* in man. They insisted—All power to think, speak, or act aright, is in and from the spirit of Christ; and all merit is (not in man, how high soever in grace, but merely) in the blood of Christ. So he and they taught. There is no power in man, till it is given him from above, to do one good work, to speak one good word, or to form one good desire. For it is not enough to say all men are *sick of sin:* no, we are all 'DEAD in trespasses and sins.' . . . And we are all helpless, both with regard to the power and to the guilt of sin. For 'who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' None less than the Almighty. Who can raise those that are *dead* spiritually, dead in sin? None but he who raised us from the dust of the earth. But on what consideration will he do this? 'Not for works of righteousness that we have done.' 'The dead cannot praise thee, O Lord;' nor do anything for the sake of which they should be raised to life. Whatever therefore God does, he does it merely for the sake of his well beloved Son. . . . Here then is the sole meritorious cause of every blessing we do or can enjoy; in particular of our pardon and acceptance with God, of our full and free justification. But by what means do we become inte-

must it seem to impartial readers in our day, that from this brief document should ensue, after such antecedents, a violent controversy of six years' continuance. The Church may at least learn from such facts an admonitory lesson; in this instance it may learn more—that the wisdom of God can overrule even the errors of good men for the promotion of his cause.

The Countess of Huntingdon, with exaggerated alarm, "apprehended that the fundamental truths of the Gospel were struck at" in the Minute.*

Wesley "having for several years been convinced that he had not done his duty to that valuable woman," and believing that she and her associates "were jealous of their authority," sent her an admonitory letter, telling "her all that was in his heart" respecting her faults. If it were ever needed, it was now unseasonable, and could hardly fail to be unfavourably interpreted. It only exasperated the doctrinal offence.

The ardent Shirley opposed the Minute, and deemed "peace in such a case a shameful indolence, and silence no less than treachery." The Countess declared that whoever did not wholly disavow it should leave her college at Trevecca, notwithstanding dogmatic opinions had never been made a condition of admission there, and Arminians, Calvinists, and Universalists had been represented among her teachers, the Arminians predominating in the faculty. Fletcher, its president, who alone of either party seemed competent, in his saintly "meekness of wisdom," to enter into the controversy without prejudice, was absent; Benson, the Arminian head master, defended the Minute, and was dismissed. Benson's dismissal deeply affected Fletcher. He wrote to the Countess that "Mr. Benson made a very just defence when he said, he did hold with me the possibility of salvation for all men; that mercy is offered

rested in what Christ has done and suffered? 'Not by works, lest any man should boast;' but by faith alone. 'We conclude,' says the apostle, 'that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law.' And 'to as many as [thus] receive him, giveth he power to become the sons of God, even to those that believe in his name: who are born, not of the will of man but of God.' And 'except a man be [thus] born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' But all who are thus 'born of the spirit,' have 'the kingdom of God within them.' . . . His indwelling Spirit makes them both holy in heart, and 'holy in all manner of conversation.' But still, seeing all this is a free gift, through the righteousness and blood of Christ, there is eternally the same reason to remember, 'he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.'"—Wesley's Sermons, No. 53. It is very appropriately placed in juxtaposition with his celebrated Anti-Calvinistic discourse on Free Grace.

* Life and Times, vol. ii. chap. 39.

to all, and yet may be received or rejected. If this be what your Ladyship calls Mr. Wesley's opinion, free-will, Arminianism, and if every Arminian must quit the College, I am actually discharged also; for, in my present view of things, I must hold that sentiment if I believe that the Bible is true, and that God is love." To Benson he also wrote: "If the plan of the College be overthrown, I have nothing more to say to it: the confined tool of any one party I never was, and never will be. Take care, my dear sir, not to make matters worse than they are; and cast the mantle of forgiving love over circumstances that might injure the cause of God, so far as it is put into the hands of that eminent lady, who hath so well deserved of the Church of Christ."* Fletcher visited the college, preached with much dejection, and took his final leave; his resignation being promptly accepted by the Countess.

The troubled elements could not now be allayed. Wesley sent to the Countess a letter, June 19, 1771, arguing against her misconstruction of the Minute, referring to his sermon on "Salvation by faith," published in 1738, thirty-two years before; to that on "The Lord our Righteousness," issued in 1765; and to his funeral discourse on Whitefield, printed within a few months, as proofs of his orthodoxy; declaring that for more than thirty years it had been the same and unquestioned, and concluding with assurances of affectionate regard and most catholic sentiments.† The Countess would not relent. She issued a remarkable Circular, signed by Shirley, inviting all clergymen and laymen, of whatever denomination, who shared their opinions respecting the Minute, to meet in Bristol during the session of Wesley's next Conference there, and to "go in a body to the said Conference, and insist upon a formal recantation of the said Minute." If the "dreadful heresy" should not be recanted, they proposed to sign and publish a Protest against it. A copy of the Minute was enclosed, as also the form of Protest, and the assurance was given that "lodgings would be provided" for the protesting visitors.‡

Wesley was not alarmed, nor deterred a moment from his usual labours, by the threatened storm. While pursuing his work in Ireland he printed, July 10, 1771, a Defence of the Minute, for private circulation among his preachers, to prepare them for the

* Life of Benson, by Treffry, chap. ii.

† Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. chap. 39.

‡ See the "Circular" in Fletcher's First Check to Antinomianism, and the form of Protest in Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. chap. 39.—Note.

approaching Conference.* Zealous for what they deemed the truth, these devout Calvinists, though accustomed, as many of them had been, to the highest courtesies of life, perceived not the egregious impropriety of their proposed interference with Wesley's Conference—a private session of preachers which never had sat, and does not yet sit, with open doors. They believed "that as all under the name of Methodists may, and are too generally supposed to hold principles essentially the same," they had a right to make thus formally their protest. Wesley perceived the absurdity of the proposed course, and remonstrated against it. The Countess saw it also, but at too late a moment to retrace her steps. The evening before the Conference she wrote to him, in order to "soften or remove his objections;" she acknowledged that the "circular was too hastily drawn up," and recanted it, hoping her example would lead to the "recantation of the Minute." "As Christians," she remarked, "we wish to retract what a more deliberate consideration might have prevented." Wesley, deeming the retraction too late, and knowing, perhaps, that the circular had failed to bring together more than eight persons, and few of these from beyond the city,† returned no answer. Shirley himself, on arriving at Bristol to lead the protesting "body," seems to have discovered the awkwardness of his position, and, on the morning of the Conference, wrote to Wesley and his preachers, "regretting that offence should have been given by the mode of the circular," and requesting to know by what other course the protesting brethren might communicate with them. Wesley sent only an oral answer, intimating that Shirley and his associates would be received on Thursday, the third day of the session, and thereby implying that their intrusive visit should be allowed only at his own discretion. Shirley, with two preachers of the Countess's (the Rev. Messrs. Glascot and Owen), three laymen (John Lloyd, Esq., of Bath, Mr. James Ireland of Bristol, and Mr. Winter), and two students of the Trevecca College, composed the protesting company. Berridge, Venn, Romaine, Madan, all the prominent Calvinistic preachers in fine, maintained a dignified reserve.

The Conference was unusually large, for Wesley's preachers had resorted to Bristol with eager expectations. At the introduction

* Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i. page 365. London, 1862.

† Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 23. The Countess wrote to Thornton complaining of "the falling off of those who had promised her support." "Four only," she states, "act with coolness and firmness in co-operation with me"—Life and Times, vol. ii. chap. 39.

of the company prayer was offered by Wesley; the apologetic letters of the Countess and Shirley were then read, and the latter expressed the "hope that the submission made was satisfactory to the gentlemen of the Conference. This was admitted; but then it was urged that, as the offence given by the circular had been very public, so ought to be the letter of submission." * The Conference was not inclined to be uncharitable, but it was quite right that it should maintain its self-respect in such peculiar circumstances, and Shirley promptly consented to have the letters published.

Wesley met the case with his usual self-possession and dignity. He rose and addressed the Conference, remarking that for more than thirty years he had preached daily the doctrine which he was now accused of denying; no man in England had preached it more extensively, or written it more explicitly; the Minute did not deny it; and if that document were even ambiguous, yet men of candour should interpret it by his well-known antecedents. He suspected personal hostility toward himself, and deemed that this was the origin, however unconsciously, of the opposition to the "Minute." Shirley warmly protested his good-will toward Wesley, and that he opposed only what he deemed the dangerous tendency of the "Minutes," and "entreated them, for the Lord's sake, that they would go so far as they could, with a good conscience, in giving the world satisfaction," by a suitable explanation. To this proposal Wesley and his brethren could not, of course, object. They could explain without denying their opinion. Shirley submitted a Declaration he had drawn up. Wesley made a few not material alterations, and, with fifty-three of his preachers, cordially signed it.† But two refused to give it their signatures, questioning its propriety after what had occurred, and doubting the use that would be made of it. The sturdy John Nelson's name is not upon it; he had "felt an old man's bone within him," under the abuse of the young corporal at York, and, if he was present at this Conference, he loved Wesley too much, and was too thoroughly an English gentleman, not to resent somewhat these extraordinary misconstructions and

* A Narrative of the Principal Circumstances relative to the Rev. Mr. Wesley's late Conference held in Bristol, August 6, 1771, at which the Rev. Mr. Shirley and others, his friends, were present; with the Declaration then agreed to by Mr. Wesley and fifty-three of the Preachers in connexion with him. By the Rev. Mr. Shirley. Bath. 1771.

† The author of Lady Huntingdon's Life and Times says that Wesley wrote the Declaration; but Shirley, in his "Narrative," expressly states that he had drawn it up, and that, in submitting it to the Conference, he expressed a hope that they would not take offence at his having done so.

annoyances. Thomas Olivers stoutly resisted the Declaration; he rebuked, with unnecessary defiance, the conduct of the Calvinists, and thought that the explanation was liable to an unfavourable doctrinal interpretation. Fletcher, to whom the proceedings were reported, and whose Christian tenderness nothing could annoy, wrote afterward of Shirley's conduct on the occasion as "like that of a minister of the Prince of Peace, and a meek, humble, loving brother in the Gospel of Christ."

The Declaration affirms, that "Whereas the doctrinal points in the Minutes of a Conference held in London, August 7, 1770, have been understood to favour 'justification by works,' now we, the Rev. John Wesley, and others assembled in Conference, do declare that we had no such meaning, and that we abhor the doctrine of 'justification by works' as a most perilous and abominable doctrine. And as the said Minutes are not sufficiently guarded in the way they are expressed, we hereby solemnly declare, in the sight of God, that we have no trust or confidence but in the alone merits of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, for justification or salvation, either in life, death, or the day of judgment. And though no one is a real Christian believer (and consequently cannot be saved) who doeth not good works when there is time and opportunity, yet our works have no part in meriting or purchasing our justification, from first to last, either in whole or in part." *

After it was signed, Shirley was startled with the unexpected demand that, as he had now the pledge of Wesley and the Conference respecting their meaning in the Minute, he should, on his part, make some public acknowledgment that he had mistaken its design. He hesitated, but when one of the lay preachers rose and significantly asked him if he doubted the honesty of John Wesley, he yielded, and two days afterwards wrote the avowal, that the Declaration agreed to in Conference had convinced him "he had mistaken the meaning of the doctrinal points in the Minutes." The interview was concluded with prayer, and the warm-hearted Irishman retired, congratulating himself that, for his own part, he was perfectly sincere, and thought it one of the happiest and most honourable days of his life.†

From these scenes was now to arise a controversy, fierce and prolonged, yet important in its results. It was to give a permanent character to the theology of Methodism; a resurrection to the faith which the Synod of Dort had proscribed; greater prominence to

* Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. chap. 39.
† Shirley's Narrative, p. 17.



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the doctrines of Arminius and Grotius than all their continental champions had secured for them ; to spread evangelical Arminianism over England, over all the Protestant portion of the New World, and more or less around the whole world ; to modify, to mollify it may rather be said, the theological tone of evangelical Christendom then, and probably for all coming time.

Its historical importance justifies a fuller account of it than has usually been given by writers of either party.

The pious vicar of Madeley, who, with declining health, had been pursuing, in his "beloved solitude," as he calls it, his divine studies and useful labours, had received the circular with painful surprise, and also a request from Wesley to defend his Minute. He prepared his Five Letters to Shirley ; the first of his noted "Checks to Antinomianism." They had been sent to Wesley, and were actually in print, at Bristol, during the Conference. They were now published.

Unnecessary pains have been taken by Wesleyan writers to vindicate Wesley from reproach, for allowing the controversy to be continued after the reconciliation of the parties at the Conference. But the design of the original Minute, the suppression of Antinomianism, was still as relevant as before. Fletcher himself speaks of "the almost general Antinomianism of our congregations."* "If the Lord does not put a stop to this growing evil," he says, "we shall soon see everywhere, what we see in too many places, self-conceited, unhumbled men rising against the truths and ministers of God." "We stand now as much in need of a reformation from Antinomianism as our ancestors did of a reformation from Popery."†

Wesley had not recanted the Minute, but explained it; and now, from the liability of a misconstruction of his conciliatory course, and the prevalence of the evil against which his protest had been directed, it was more than ever both just and necessary that he should vindicate and enforce it, not in contradiction to, but in accordance with, the explanatory Declaration.‡

* Second Check to Antinomianism.

† Third Check.

‡ The author of the Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon (vol. ii. chap. 39) represents the Declaration as a "recantation," but I am reluctantly constrained to warn the reader, that nearly the whole account which that writer gives of the controversy is a caricature, as much so as the portrait of Wesley which disfigures his second volume. To represent the Declaration as a "recantation" of the Minute, is not only contrary to the obvious sense of the former, but an impeachment of Shirley, who himself *recanted* his construction of the Minute, declaring that he "had mistaken" its meaning. See his acknowledgment,

Fletcher, who was not at the Conference, wrote, on hearing of the reconciliation, to his friend Ireland, a wealthy merchant of Bristol, consenting to stay the publication of his "Letters." Ireland was a Calvinistic Methodist, and had signed the circular, but he was a cordial friend of both parties. With Thornton of London, a like-minded layman,* he laboured subsequently for the restoration of harmony between them; and his opulent country seat, near Bristol, was their common home, and the scene of many agreeable reunions among them at a later day. Fletcher did not consider his pamphlet irrelevant to the present state of the controversy; but, as it was addressed to Shirley, and contained many personal references to his position, and to opinions published by him some ten years before in a volume of sermons, his charitable spirit shrunk from any possible irritation which the publication might give to the allayed dispute. His letter, however, arrived too late. Wesley, as usual, had hastened from the Conference to his itinerant labours, and, as the work was in print, he had left orders with his head printer to issue it. He had also commissioned Thomas Olivers to see it distributed. Ireland took the letter to the printer, and also to the stewards of the Methodist Society in Bristol, but in vain; Olivers, who had honestly, though obstinately, resisted the Declaration in the Conference, against the example of Wesley, Benson, and his other associates, now as steadfastly persisted in the publication of the "Check."

Fletcher's pamphlet produced an immediate sensation. Highly as he had been esteemed as a preacher, he was now seen to be superior as a writer. His command of the English language had seldom been equalled by a foreigner; his style was not only accurate but

as also a very just view of the entire controversy, in Jackson's Charles Wesley (vol. ii. chap. 23). Jackson says: "To make an impression upon the public mind injurious to Mr. Wesley, great prominence was given to this subject in the advertisement of Lady Huntingdon's Life, which was said to contain, among other things of great importance, a document of intense interest, in which Mr. Wesley and his preachers retracted their own doctrines. The trick was despicable. The document which was represented as such a curiosity had been before the world nearly seventy years! It was published both by Mr. Wesley and Mr. Shirley; and was well known to exist in Watson's Life of Mr. Wesley, a work to which Lady Huntingdon's biographer distinctly refers, and where he must have seen it."

* John Thornton, Esq., "a great friend," wrote Fletcher, "to a catholic Gospel. If clergymen are backward to promote peace, the God of peace may provoke them to jealousy, by raising from among the laity such instruments of reconciliation as will be a terror to bigotry, and an example of universal love."—Benson's Life of Fletcher, chap. vi.

elegant; his lucid argument, his extraordinary illustrative aptness, and, above all, his Christian benignity, surprised and delighted impartial readers. The publication could not fail, however, to affect Shirley and his immediate friends unfavourably. He wrote to Fletcher stating his intention to publish a Narrative of the facts of the controversy, including letters of Fletcher to Ireland against the issuing of the "Check." Fletcher, not with defiance, but with the tenderest personal affection, gave him permission to publish the letters. "They show," he wrote, "my peculiar love and respect for you, which I shall at all times think an honour, and at this juncture shall feel a peculiar pleasure in seeing proclaimed to the world." If the Narrative should be friendly, he adds, and printed in the same form as his "Check," he would purchase copies to the value of ten pounds, and, binding them with his own pamphlet, circulate them gratuitously, to show that they "made a loving war." Shirley's Narrative was published; it gave the Declaration of the Conference, but with an important phrase in the last line so changed, as to read "our *salvation*" instead of "our justification,"* a modification of the sense of the document which readers of the later "Checks" of Fletcher must perceive to be of no small importance in the controversy. It was doubtless an accidental error; Shirley was incapable of fraudulently making it. The passages from the letters of Fletcher to Ireland were liable to give the impression, that his wish to withdraw his pamphlet from the press arose from scruples against the Minute which he did not really entertain. He replied to the Narrative by the publication of his "Second Check," with an introductory letter to Wesley, in which he quotes a letter that he had addressed to Shirley, showing that, in his correspondence with Ireland, he had proposed to withdraw his "First Check" for personal reasons, and not because of any doubt of the Minute, though he believed the latter might have been better guarded in its language. "Whether my letters are suppressed or not," he had written to Ireland, "the Minute *must* be vindicated. Mr. Wesley owes it to the Church, to the *real Protestants*, to all his societies, and to his own aspersed character."† He replies, in a postscript to a singular publication, purporting to be "A Conversation between Richard Hill, Esq., Rev. Mr. Madan, and Father Walsh," a Parisian monk. The latter had pronounced the Minute to be Pelagian, and his Protestant interlocutors declare that "the extracts from the Minutes are too rotten even for a Papist to rest upon."‡

* Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i. book ii. chap. 3, 1862.

† Second Check to Antinomianism.

‡ Conversation between Richard Hill, Esq., &c. London, 1772.

"Astonishing!" exclaims Fletcher, "that our opposers should think it worth their while to raise one recruit against us in the immense city of Paris, where fifty thousand might be raised against the Bible itself!"

These details would be unnecessary, if not tedious, here, were it not that partisan accounts of the controversy have persistently represented Fletcher as wavering, and even conscientiously scrupling, about the part he was taking in it.* On the contrary, he advances through the discussion with a triumphant step, logically and morally triumphant; with a Christian temper which knows no disturbance, a logic which admits of no refutation. But he continued to have serious misgivings respecting the personal effect of the controversy on the combatants themselves, and his sanctified conscience revolted from the probability of any moral injury to his antagonists. He expressed his apprehensions to his friends, and regretted his "First Check" as a "necessary evil." Charles Wesley responded, that the question needed such a discussion; that Lady Huntingdon had pronounced his brother "a Papist unmasked," a "heretic," and an "apostate;" that "a poem on his apostasy" was about to appear; that letters against him "had been sent to every serious preacher, Churchman and Dissenter, through the land, together with the Gospel Magazine," a bad-tempered periodical, started by the Calvinistic party, but afterwards abandoned. "Great," he adds, are the shoutings, 'Now that he lieth let him rise up no more!' This is all the cry; his dearest friends and children are staggered, and scarce know what to think. You, in your corner, cannot conceive the mischief that has been done and is still doing. But your letters, in the hands of Providence, may answer the good ends you proposed by writing them."† Fletcher hesitated no more.

Shirley, whose Narrative was written in the best spirit, recanted his sermons (which Fletcher had justly used as confirmatory of the doctrine of the Minute), but did not answer the "Second Check." Sir Richard Hill now (1772) entered the field; he had shown an aptitude for controversy in his "*Pietas Oxoniensis*" and "*Goliath Slain*," in defence of the expelled students of St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford. He addressed Five Letters to Fletcher, and called forth the "Third Check" from Madeley. Sir Richard responded in Six Letters, and his brother Rowland joined in the assault with charac-

* Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. chap. 39; corrected by Jackson's Life of C. Wesley, chap. 23.

† Preface to Fletcher's Second Check. The letter is anonymous, but Jackson attributes it to Charles Wesley. Life of C. Wesley, chap. 23.

teristic pamphlets.* Meanwhile Walter Sellon and Thomas Olivers entered into the fray. Both of them were staunch friends of Wesley, and good logicians. Sellon had been a baker, but joined Wesley's itinerants, and afterwards, by Lady Huntingdon's influence, obtained orders in the Church. By thorough self-culture he had become an accomplished divine. Olivers was one of those trophies of Methodism which so often astonish us in its early history. "He was a sturdy Welshman," as Southey calls him in allusion to his part in this controversy, and had been rescued by Methodism from almost hopeless reprobacy. He was a shoemaker, and travelled at large through the country, working only at intervals, plunging into vice, contracting debts, and congratulating himself on his adroitness in fraud. Reclaimed under Whitefield's preaching, he became industrious, and, purchasing a horse, rode to his old haunts to pay his debts with interest, and to beg pardon of all who had suffered from his vices. He was a laborious preacher under Wesley. His indefatigable studies improved his naturally strong faculties to uncommon vigour, and Wesley made him his editor in London. He not only distinguished himself in the present controversy, but composed hymns and music which the world will never let die.† One of the most painful facts in the controversy was the manner in which this man, so nobly self-redeemed, was treated by his opponents. Sir Richard Hill would not, because he really could not, answer his keen logic. "I shall not," said he, "take the least notice of him, or read a line of his composition any more than, if I was travelling on the road, I would stop to lash, or even order my footman to lash, every impertinent little quadruped in a village that should come out and bark at me, but would willingly let the contemptible animal have the satisfaction of thinking he had driven me out of sight."‡ The rugged Welshman resented, and had an honest right to resent, such treatment; and, though inferior to his

* For a full account of the works published by the Hills and others on this controversy, see Appendix A.

† He wrote the magnificent hymn, "The God of Abraham praise," (Nos. 669–71 in the Methodist Hymn Book,) of which Montgomery says: "There is not in our language a lyric of more majestic style, more elevated thought, or more glowing imagery." He also composed the excellent tune called "Helmsley," for the hymn, "Lo! he comes with clouds descending," etc. The latter hymn has been attributed to him.

‡ [Fletcher aptly remarked upon this passage, "How lordly is this speech! How surprising in the mouth of a good man, who says to *The Carpenter*, 'My Lord and my God!' When the author of 'Goliath Slain' dropped it from his victorious pen, he had forgotten the *voluntary humility* for which *his* doctrines of grace are so conspicuous!"—E. E.]

opponent in the social accident of rank, showed himself superior to him in native intellect and genuine manhood.

The Rev. Augustus Montague Toplady entered the arena with great ability and equal vehemence. He presented one of those inexplicable combinations of great virtues and great defects, not to call them vices, which at once excite our wonder, and teach us a lesson of charity for the infirmities of our common humanity. His father died at the siege of Carthagena, and the military spirit was ever prompt for controversy in the son. He was educated at Westminster and Dublin, and converted, when but sixteen years old, in a barn in Ireland, under a discourse from an illiterate lay preacher. A good scholar, a keen thinker, a most vigorous though often as coarse a writer, he was also a man of genuine piety and ardent zeal. His hymns are known throughout English Christendom, and his theological writings, filling six octavos, are recognized as invincible standards by hyper-Calvinists generally. He assailed Olivers with merciless severity, but he had the magnanimity, on better acquaintance, to acknowledge the worth of the "Methodist Cobbler." They accidentally met, and Toplady wrote to a friend: "To say the truth, I am glad I saw Mr. Olivers, for he appears to be a person of stronger sense and better behaviour than I imagined." *

Fletcher meanwhile continued his pamphlets. His Fourth Check was entitled "Logica Genevensis," a reply to both Sir Richard and Rowland Hill. Sir Richard now proposed, in a private letter to Fletcher, to discontinue the controversy; but the latter deemed it important to pursue the discussion till the Antinomianism of the day should be fully refuted. Sir Richard replied in an unfortunate private letter, and soon after published another pamphlet, entitled "The Finishing Stroke," to which Fletcher replied in a Fifth Check; and in the second part of the same work responded to Berridge, the eccentric vicar of Everton, who, of course, could not keep out of the battle, but had published "The Christian World Unmasked." Madan also had a hand in the strife, though not openly: Fletcher's private correspondence shows that he circulated a manuscript essay against Wesley's Minute, and revised for the press the pamphlets of Rowland Hill.† Hervey, even, singed his gossamer wings in the fire of the field.

Ireland of Bristol, and Thornton of London, still endeavoured

* Southey's Life of Wesley, chapter 25. Southey speaks heartily of the good Welshman, but more from his sympathy with Arminianism than with Methodism.

† Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 23.

to promote a reconciliation of the parties, and received to their hospitalities the opposing writers. They provided for a meeting between Fletcher and Lady Huntingdon, and his next Check, (1774,) entitled "An Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism," contained "An Essay on Truth, or a Rational Vindication of the Doctrine of Salvation by Faith," dedicated to her, in which he endeavoured to show the safe middle ground between Antinomianism and Pelagianism, on which considerate men of both parties could stand. Fletcher's health suffered much during this prolonged contest; he resorted for relief to Stoke Newington, where, amid the hospitalities of an eminent Christian family, he was visited by several of his most distinguished opponents, who left him, wondering at his heresies and his saintliness. His entertainment there was a sort of social ovation, but he consecrated the mansion into a social sanctuary. Rowland Hill came to shake his hand as a brother. A visitor said: "I went to see a man with one foot in the grave, but found a man with one foot in heaven." *

After a pause of some months the battle was resumed (1774) by Toplady's "Historic Proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England," written mainly in reply to Sellon's "Church of England Vindicated from the Charge of Absolute Predestination;" Sellon having also previously published his "Arguments against the Doctrine of General Redemption considered," and his "Defence of God's Sovereignty."† Toplady kept up a brisk fire by the publication of his "Sermon on Freewill and Merit," his "Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity asserted," and other works. His "Scheme" was a reply to a tract by Wesley. Fletcher responded in "Remarks on Mr. Toplady's Scheme," and "An Answer to Mr. Toplady's Vindication of the Decrees;" and concluded the controversy with his "Last Check to Antinomianism," a defence of Wesley's doctrine of Christian Perfection, an essay of which it may justly be said, that its temper illustrates the doctrine which its logic defends.

During six years had this controversy raged. The press teemed

* Among the guests who thronged to him at Stoke Newington was William Perronet, one of the sons of Wesley's venerable friend and counsellor at Shoreham. Young Perronet "often said that the first sight of Mr. Fletcher fixed an impression upon his mind which never wore off till it issued in a real conversion to God."—Benson's Fletcher, chap. 6.

† Fletcher says of the "Church of England Vindicated,"—"I have found it a masterly mixture of the skill belonging to the sensible scholar, the good logician, and the sound Anti-Crispian divine." Of Sellon's whole works he says, "All these are well worth the reading of every pious and sensible man." —Third Check.

with pamphlets on both sides, and, by the time the contest was over, the virtual unity of Calvinistic and Arminian Methodism had ended. When the smoke of the battle cleared away, the two parties could only be seen, remotely and permanently apart, in the opposite extremities of the field; and for more than three-quarters of a century their reciprocal recognitions have been mostly invidious, and their respective accounts of the great and decisive struggle have been so much affected by their mutual prejudices, that the impartial student finds it expedient to dismiss his inquiries respecting it, and console himself by the obvious good results which the wisdom of God has brought forth from this human folly, and the really excellent characters and godly lives of the men whose infirmities rendered the conflict so fierce and so protracted.

The writers of both parties have usually assigned to each other's side the responsibility of the acerbity of the dispute. It is not necessary to encumber our pages with examples of its bitterness; it is, however, no more than due to the fidelity of history to say, that the reader could hardly find, in a vocabulary of Billingsgate, more surprising illustrations of the language of crimination, and even of "slang." Nearly all writers who have treated of the controversy concur, nevertheless, in distinguishing one exception. Fletcher, the chief Arminian champion, was declining in health during the contest, and he wrote, not only as on the verge of the grave, but as at the gate of heaven. Amid the strife he wrote to his friend Ireland: "O how life goes! I walked, now I gallop into eternity! The bowl of life goes rapidly down the steep hill of time. Let us be wise; embrace we Jesus and the resurrection."* To Charles Wesley he wrote: "I thank God I feel myself in a good degree dead to praise and dispraise; I hope at least that it is so, because I do not feel that the one lifts me up, or that the other dejects me. I want to see a Pentecostal Christian Church; and if it is not to be seen at this time upon earth, I am willing to go and see this glorious wonder in heaven." It can be said of his controversial pamphlets, that they may be read by devout men even as aids to devotion; they are severe only in the keenness of their arguments; they glow with a continuous but unobtrusive strain of Christian exhortation; the argument alternates with pleas for peace; with practical addresses to "imperfect believers who embrace the doctrine of Christian perfection," to "perfect Christians," to "Christians who disbelieve the doctrine of perfection," and with directions "how to secure the blessings of peace and brotherly love." Dixon,

* Benson's Life of Fletcher, chap 6.

the principal of St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, and the defender of its expelled Methodist students, wrote to Benson, after reading the "First Check:" "Too much cannot be said in commendation of them. I had not read his first letter before I was so charmed with the spirit, as well as the abilities, of the writer, that the gushing tears could not be hindered from giving full testimony of my heart-felt satisfaction."*

It may be probably affirmed that no man, previously undetermined in his opinions on the Calvinistic controversy, can read Fletcher's "Checks" through, without closing them an Arminian; and it is no detraction from them to add, that this effect is owing to their moral as well as to their logical power. "I nothing wonder," says Wesley, "at a serious clergyman who, being resolved to live and die in his own opinion, when pressed to read them, replied, 'No, I will never read them, for if I did I should be of his mind.'"†

As literary and controversial productions, they have been estimated with prejudice by the respective parties; the one pronouncing them unrivalled, the other superficial. If the opinion of one of our most accomplished writers, respecting the greatest of modern philosophers,‡ is correct, that his genius was, and that the true philosophic genius always is, a fusion of reason and imagination, then Fletcher of Madeley was hardly less a philosopher than a saint. His illustrative power surprises us on almost every page; and what is logic but the deduction of truth from what we already know—and what is that deduction but a process of illustrative comparison—what the syllogism itself but a formula of comparison?

Written as detached pamphlets, and abounding in contemporary and personal references, the "Checks" could not possibly have the consistence and compactness of a thorough treatise on the difficult questions of the great "Quinquarticular Controversy." But they comprehend, nevertheless, nearly every important thesis of the subject. Its highest philosophical questions—theories of the Free-

* Benson's Fletcher, chap. 5, Southey says: "If ever true Christian charity was manifested in polemical writing, it was by Fletcher of Madeley. Even theological controversy never, in the slightest degree, irritated his heavenly temper. . . In such a temper did this saintly man address himself to the work of controversy; and he carried it on with correspondent candour, and with distinguished ability. His manner is diffuse, and the florid parts, and the unction, betray their French origin; but the reasoning is acute and clear; the spirit of his writings is beautiful, and he was master of the subject in all its bearings. His great object was to conciliate the two parties, and to draw the line between the solifidian and Pelagian errors."—Life of Wesley, chap. 25.

† Wesley's Life of Fletcher. Works, vol. xi.

‡ Sir James Mackintosh on Lord Bacon, "Progress of Ethical Science."

dom of the Will, Prescience, Fatalism—are elaborately discussed by them, as in the "Remarks on Toplady's Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity," and the "Answer to Toplady's Vindication of the Decrees." The Scriptural argument is thorough; and exegetical expositions are given in detail, as in the "Discussion of the ninth chapter to the Romans," and the "View of St. Paul's Doctrine of the first chapter to the Ephesians." No writer has better balanced the apparently contradictory passages of Scripture on the question.* The popular argument has never, perhaps, been more effectively drawn out; and if, from the necessities of the pamphlet combat, the philosophical examination of the subject is not given with sufficient consecutiveness and closeness, what, after all, is the philosophical sphere of the controversy but a region of mists and abstractions, where the legitimate logical points are impalpable, and where, in any other questions of human interest —in theories of science, of government, of morals—the highest philosophy finds itself baffled, and recovers its confidence only by retreating to the more practicable grounds of consciousness, common reason, and common sense? The consciousness of the freedom of the will, and the consequent responsibility of man for his moral acts, are unshakable postulates, strongholds of power in this ancient controversy, which tower for ever above the fogs of its polemics, and give a supremacy to its popular logic, before which philosophy has ever recoiled, and will ever have to recoil. Outraging these postulates, philosophy ceases to be philosophy, and becomes demented metaphysics. The Church may indeed despair of ever being relieved from the intolerable incubus of this ancient question till its insoluble problems are separated from dogmatic theology, and assigned to the sphere of metaphysics; and the practical tendency of modern thought justifies the hope, that even such a deliverance may yet be attained.†

As to the historical results of these writings, the emphatic language with which they have already been mentioned is not exaggerated. "Fletcher's Checks," says one of his critics, who probably

* Scriptural Scales, etc.; Second Part of Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism.

† Buckle (Introduction to the History of Civilization, vol. i. chap. 1) says, that "among the more advanced European thinkers there is a growing opinion that both doctrines [Predestination and Freewill] are wrong; or, at all events, that we have no sufficient evidence of their truth." His opinion (chap. 14) that Calvinism is a faith for the democratic, and Arminianism for the aristocratic classes, is one of those generalizations from a few accidental facts, which are too characteristic of his important work.

never read them through, "are by this time forgotten."* Quite otherwise is the fact. No polemical works of a former age are so extensively circulated as these "Checks." They are read more to-day than they were during the excitement of the controversy. They control the opinions of the largest and most effective body of evangelical clergymen on the earth. They are staples in every Methodist publishing-house. Every Methodist preacher is supposed to read them as an indispensable part of his theological studies, and they are found at all points of the globe whither Methodist preachers have borne the cross. They have been more influential in the denomination than Wesley's own controversial writings on the subject; for he was content to pursue his itinerant work, replying but briefly to the Hills,† and leaving the contest to Fletcher.

This controversy has unquestionably influenced, if not directly through Fletcher's writings, yet indirectly through Methodism, the subsequent tone of theological thought in much of the Protestant world. Arminianism, after its proscription at Dort, became perverted by latitudinarianism and other errors, which obscured the real faith of Arminius to the eyes of evangelical Christendom generally. Yet it has been justly remarked, that these were results with which neither Arminius nor the genuine Arminian theology had any thing to do; and to trace them to him were not more just than to trace German neology to Luther, and German Socinianism to Calvin. ‡ It passed through the capricious changes to which nearly all opinions were subject, from the time of Arminius to the French Revolution. In Holland it advocated liberty of opinion; in France, meanwhile, it arrayed the Jesuits against the Jansenists, who were the real reformers, and defenders of free thought. In England, like Calvinism, it became complicated with political parties. The Puritans overthrew it with the national Church; it returned at the Restoration, and swayed the Establishment for half a century. The position of the Church, in relation to English Puritanism and Scotch Presbyterianism, prejudiced its influence as a theological system, and it became associated, in the public mind, with the varying opinions of its great men, Episcopius, Grotius, Limborch, Casaubon, Vossius, Le Clerc, and Wetstein on the Continent; Cudworth, Tillotson,

* Isaac Taylor, Wesley and Methodism, p. 116.

† "Remarks on Mr. Hill's Review," etc.; "Answer to Rowland Hill's Imposture Detected:" "Remarks on Mr. Hill's Farrago double-distilled." Wesley's Works, vol. x.

‡ Guthrie's Life of Arminius, and the Controversy in his Times.

Chillingworth, Stillingfleet, Burnet, and Pearson in England. Under the Stuarts it was "High Church," formal, and without spiritual life; but under Methodism it resumed its original evangelical purity, took a popular form, and became energetic with moral vitality. In its genuine character it is as remote from Pelagianism as is Calvinism itself.* It differs from the latter essentially, only on the questions of predestination and perseverance. In both England and America Methodism had to correct the false significance which the public mind attached to the term Arminianism, and it has effectually done so. "This controversy," says the most commanding intellect of Wesleyan Methodism, "has been productive of important consequences. It showed to the pious and moderate Calvinists how well the richest views of evangelical truth could be united with Arminianism; and it effected, by its bold and fearless exhibition of the logical consequences of the doctrines of the Decrees, much greater moderation in those who still admitted them, and gave birth to some softened modifications of Calvinism in the age that followed—an effect which has remained to this day."†

Though the two Methodistic parties were now irreconcilably divided, and the combatants could not readily recover from their irritations, they ceased to contend, and resumed their more useful labours in their more defined spheres. Rowland Hill lamented his harsh language, and suppressed one of his severest publications. "Thus," he wrote, "have I done my utmost to prevent the evil that might arise from any wrong touches of the ark of God."‡ He made, as we have seen, a friendly visit to Fletcher, during his retreat for health at Stoke Newington. Berridge welcomed the Madeley vicar to his parsonage at Everton. Fletcher had not been there for about twenty years, and it was doubtful what effect the protracted controversy had produced on the peculiar temper of his old friend. The Aristophanic rector had written with his

* Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, by Drs. M'Clintock and Strong. New York, 1859. See also an elaborate article by Professor Stuart on the "Creed, &c., of Arminius," in the Biblical Repository, vol. i. He says: "Let the injustice then of merging Pelagius and Arminius together no more be done among us, as it often has been." And again: "Most of the accusations of heresy made against him appear to be the offspring of suspicion, or of a wrong construction of his words." See also the Works of Arminius, translated by Nichols and Bagnall, 3 vols. Auburn, 1853.

† Richard Watson's Life of Wesley, chap. 11.

‡ Sidney's Life of Rowland Hill, chap. 4. His contributions to the Controversy will be found in the Appendix.

characteristic sarcasm; but as his opponent entered the parsonage, Berridge ran towards him, took him into his arms, and wept. "My dear brother," he sobbed, "this is indeed a satisfaction I never expected. How could we write against each other, when we both aim at the same thing, the glory of God, and the good of souls! But my book lies quietly on the shelf; and there let it lie." "I retired," says Fletcher's travelling companion, "leaving the pious controversialists to themselves for about two hours. On my return I found them in the true spirit of Christian love, and mutually as unwilling to part as they had been happy in meeting each other. 'Brother,' said Berridge, 'we must not part without your praying with us.' The servants being called in, Fletcher offered up a prayer, filled with petitions for their being led by the Holy Spirit to greater degrees of sanctification and usefulness as ministers; and dwelt much upon that effusion of the Spirit which fills the pages of his Tract called 'The Reconciliation.' Berridge then began, and was equally warm in prayer for blessings upon 'his dear brother.' They were indeed so united in love that we were obliged, in a manner, to tear away Fletcher, that he might keep his appointment with Venn, whom he was to meet at dinner at St. Neot's. Here we found that most excellent minister waiting for us; and here we had another instance that good men of different sentiments need only be brought together, and unite at a throne of grace, to prove that they are of one heart. They met, they conversed, and parted with every demonstration of the most cordial and Christian affection. Venn was so totally absorbed by his subject, while speaking of the duties of ministers, that Fletcher was obliged to remind him, playfully, that he had a meal before him." "He was like an angel on earth," said Venn, afterwards alluding to him before his congregation at Yelling.*

Sir Richard Hill, retiring from the controversy, found worthier employment in active religious duties, and the service of his country in Parliament. During a long life he was a prominent supporter of the evangelical interests of his times, and a companion of the "good men of Clapham."

By the courtesy of Ireland, Shirley and Fletcher had at least one brotherly interview. Ireland's hospitable home continued to be the frequent resort of the leaders of both parties, and we are indebted to him for the portrait which has rendered the features of Fletcher familiar to the Christian world. Venn, who, though a Calvinist, kept aloof from the contention, spent six weeks under

* Cox's Life of Fletcher, second edition. London.

Ireland's roof with Fletcher, "during which," he says, "I never heard him say a single word which was not proper to be spoken, and which had not a tendency to minister grace to the hearers. I have known all the great men for these fifty years, but I have known none like him."

During this visit at Ireland's house, an humble Wesleyan itinerant, James Rogers, on his way to Cornwall, stopped at Bristol to greet the Arminian champion. As he arrived at the mansion with two fellow-itinerants, Fletcher was returning from a ride, which had been enjoined by his physician. He recognized them as Methodist preachers; and, dismounting, hastened towards them with extended arms. They were struck by his "apostolic appearance." He repeated most of the sixteenth chapter of John, on the promise of the Holy Ghost. "My soul," says one of the visitors, "was dissolved into tenderness, and became as melting wax before the fire!" They regretted the effect of his controversial labours upon his health. "If he fell a victim," he replied, "it was in a good cause." After a little further conversation "upon the universal love of God in Christ Jesus," the visitors were about to take their leave, when Ireland sent his footman into the yard with a bottle of wine, and slices of bread upon a waiter; they all uncovered their heads while Fletcher implored a blessing upon the refreshment; which he had no sooner done, than he handed first the bread to each, and then lifting up his eyes to heaven pronounced the words: "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." Afterwards, presenting them the wine, he said in like manner: "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ," etc. "Such a sacrament," says the narrator, "I never had before. A sense of the Divine presence rested upon us all, and we were melted into floods of tears.... We then mounted our horses and rode away. That hour more than repaid me for my whole journey from Edinburgh to Cornwall."*

Such was Fletcher, coming out of the strife of this six years' controversy. Such he had been when he entered it, and such he continued to be till he entered heaven. If an apparently disproportionate commendation has been given to him in this sketch of the controversy, it is because it is historically due to him; and because of the rare model which he presents of the theological controversialist—the most perfect one, perhaps, to be found in the history of polemics.

Shirley continued his labours as a tireless evangelist some nine

* Life of James Rogers, in "Early Methodist Preachers," vol. ii.

or ten years longer. At the last glimpse we get of him he is sitting in Dublin, "in his chair, unable to lie in his bed," dying of dropsy, but preaching "to great numbers," who crowded the drawing-rooms, the lobbies, and the staircase, as far as his voice could be heard, and the benediction of the Spirit rested on his dying labours in the conversion and sanctification of many who heard him.*

Toplady was the ablest and also the severest of Fletcher's opponents. His language respecting Wesley was hostile even to the last.† Wesley could not comprehend, any more than we can, how so much apparent rancour could consist with genuine piety, and too readily credited, and it is said circulated, unfavourable reports of his death.‡ He was as earnest, however, as he was severe. He records the struggle between the good and the evil within him: "Before I went to bed, God gave me such a sense of his love as came but little short of full assurance. Who am I, O Lord? The weakest and the vilest of all thy called ones: not only the least of saints, but the chief of sinners; but though a sinner, yet sanctified, in part, by the Holy Ghost given unto me. . . . My shortcomings and my misdoings, my unbelief and want of love, would sink me into the nethermost hell, were not Jesus my righteousness and my redemption. There is no sin which I should not commit were not Jesus, by the power of his Spirit, my sanctification."§

A short time before his death, while the sturdy polemic was gasping with consumption, a remarkable scene occurred in his chapel at Orange-street, London. Reports were circulated that he had solicited an interview with Wesley, and had asked his pardon for the severity of his writings. The belligerent but honest spirit of the restless warrior was roused. By his own request, and against the remonstrances of his physician and family, he was borne to his altar, and there made his "Dying Avowal," afterwards written out by his trembling hand, and published, in which he declared that he retracted nothing, but was about to die, steadfast to his principles and his writings. He was borne back to his chamber, and soon after to his grave. He was honest in his errors, and had a stout English heart, which commands our wonder if not our admiration, in spite of his faults. He would have stood bravest among his countrymen amid the fire of Trafalgar or Waterloo, but it requires

* Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, vol. ii. chap. 37. A portrait of him remains in Cheshunt College.

† Dying Avowal, p. 4. London, 1778.

‡ Sidney's Rowland Hill, chap. v.

§ Memoir prefixed to his Works, p. 8. London, 1837.

a more exalted courage to confront and condemn our own errors. His most fervent admirers would admire him more had he regretted, in dying, the hardly paralleled virulence of his controversial writings.*

Within one year after the controversy, he too, triumphed in the last great fight. On his death-bed he could say, that he "had not had for several months the least doubt of his personal interest in Christ." Surrounded by weeping friends, none more sympathetic than his fellow-controversialist, Rowland Hill, he exclaimed, "I am the happiest man in the world." "Oh, how this soul of mine longs to be gone! like a bird imprisoned in a cage, it longs to take its flight! Oh, that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away to the realms of bliss, and be at rest for ever! Oh, that some guardian angel might be commissioned, for I long to be absent from this body, and to be with my Lord for ever."

Thus does God pardon the infirmities of his sincere though erring servants, and gather them where they can "see eye to eye;" and thus would his infinite love reprove our mutual distrusts and uncharitableness.

We may retire then from this stormy battle-field, grateful that, amid its din and smoke, we have been able to catch some memorable glimpses of the clear and serene heaven above it.

* The best edition of his works is in six vols. 8vo., 1825. There is also an edition which has been frequently reprinted, in one royal octavo volume. His chief productions against the Arminian Methodists are, 1. Historic proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England. 2. Letter to Wesley relative to his Abridgment of Zanchius on Predestination. 3. More Work for Mr. Wesley; or, a Vindication of the Decrees and Providence of God. 4. An Old Fox tarred and feathered; occasioned by Mr. Wesley's Calm Address to the American Colonies. 5. The Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity asserted. His writings generally are an astonishing mass of learning, eloquence, piety, and vituperation.

CHAPTER III.

CALVINISTIC METHODISM FROM THE DEATH OF WHITEFIELD TO THE DEATH OF THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.

Celebration of Trevecca—Whitefield's property in America—Habersham—Cornelius Winter denied Ordination—Plans of the Countess for America—A Missionary Festival and Embarkation—Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon Slaveholders—Howell Harris—His Itinerant Adventures—His Piety—Mobs—Methodist Socialism at Trevecca—Its Christian Soldiers—Harris turns Soldier to fight against Popery—Howell Davies—Death of Harris—Grand Scene at his Burial—Daniel Rowlands, the Welsh "Thunderer"—"Shouting"—Charles of Bala—Final Views of Calvinistic Methodism in England—Cornwall—De Courcy—Newton—Cowper—Lady Huntingdon's Societies become Dissenters—Her Death—Fate of her Connexion—The "Good Men of Clapham."

WHILE the controversial battle raged, the leading evangelists of both parties were active in their ministerial labours. Soon after the appearance of Wesley's anti-Calvinistic Minute, August, 1770, the Countess of Huntingdon passed through Bristol, where Wesley awaited her, by previous arrangement, to accompany her to the anniversary of the Trevecca College; but she had determined to exclude him from her pulpits so long as he held the doctrines declared at the late Conference, and she wrote to him to that effect. There were more inviting scenes for him: without replying, he left Bristol the next day to itinerate among the mines of Cornwall, and was never afterwards invited to preach in her ladyship's chapels.*

Attended by a company of her ministers, and distinguished laymen and ladies of rank, she arrived at Trevecca, where they were received by Rowlands, Harris, and other Welsh preachers, and where a jubilee, like that already described,† was celebrated through a series of days. Venn, Berridge, Shirley, and other clergymen of the Establishment, ten of whom were present, shared in the festivities. Ireland of Bristol was with them, and Thornton

* Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii., chap. 32.

† See page 353.

of London had sent five hundred pounds for the aid of the college. The concourse of visitors was "exceedingly great." Services from a platform in the castle court were held early and late; preaching in English and Welsh, sometimes without intermission; repeated administrations of the Lord's Supper; exhortations; prayer-meetings; a public dinner, and the usual fervent demonstrations of the ardent Welsh Methodists. It was the last anniversary under Fletcher's presidency: he was present, administering the sacrament and sharing in the other exercises, and after a sermon from Venn, closed the scene with a prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the college, that it might prove a lasting blessing to the Church of Christ; upon its noble foundress, that she might long be spared to reap with joy the fruits of her generous and disinterested labours; and upon the ministers and students, that they might "prove polished shafts in the Redeemer's quiver, zealous, active, and laborious in extending the knowledge of their Divine Master, and in the last great day be found at his right hand." The next morning, as they were about to part, Fletcher, who was to meet them no more, knelt in the chapel with his aged friend, Venn, and his future opponents, Shirley and Berridge, and commended them and their brethren in the ministry to the grace of God. "A blessed influence from on high rested upon the assembled multitudes."

Trevecca continued for years to be the resort of the Calvinistic Methodists, and to replenish their pulpits, as well as to afford important ministerial supplies to the Dissenters and the Church. The Countess resided there much of her time; it was a convenient head-quarters for the extended work which she was sustaining, and she could readily despatch assistance from it to her many pulpits. Its students were trained to active religious labours; horses were kept to convey them on Saturdays to distant points, while nearer appointments were visited on foot, and the towns and villages within thirty miles around, felt continually the powerful influence of the school. Though the pupils were "irregular troops," yet, it is said, they "brought in more captives than the disciplined squadrons, and were eminently serviceable to the cause of real religion." Frequently they went forth on remote "districts" or "rounds," preaching in fields, barns, market-places, and private houses. They constituted an important part of that itinerant evangelization which was breaking into the strongholds of darkness and vice among the neglected portions of the country, and they founded or resuscitated many Churches, where stated pastors and

crowded congregations were afterwards maintained. The anniversary solemnities of the college remind us of American Methodist camp-meetings. Toplady attended one in which "a thousand and three hundred horses" were turned into a large adjacent field, besides what were stationed in neighbouring villages, and a great number of carriages. A scaffold was erected at one end of the college court, on which a book-stand was placed, and "thence," he writes, "six or seven of us preached successively, to one of the most attentive and most lively congregations I ever beheld, and great grace seemed to be upon us." Another visitor speaks of three hundred people breakfasting together on the premises; of sermons, exhortations, sacraments, love-feasts, in English and Welsh; of "many very hearty amens, and a fervent crying of 'Glory to God,'" especially under the mighty preaching of Rowlands; of every room in the building "being converted into a chapel; preaching in one, praying in another, exhorting and singing of hymns in others."

The death of Whitefield was a severe loss to Calvinistic Methodism in England, but an irreparable disaster to its plans respecting the southern part of the American colonies. Lady Huntingdon had been appointed, in his will, sole proprietor of his properties in Georgia, and upon her now devolved the task of directing the affairs of his Orphan House at Bethesda, near Savannah. The Hon. James Habersham, a wealthy merchant of that city, had been named by him executor of his affairs in the province; he was the steadfast friend of Whitefield, had been a member of the original Methodist company at Oxford, and lived and died in the faith.* Cornelius Winter, who accompanied Whitefield in his last voyage to America, returned after his death to London, with letters from Wright, governor of the colony, and Habersham, recommending him to influential persons in England for ordination, that he might return and pursue, with proper sanctions, his labours in the colony, and especially might prosecute Whitefield's favourite plans of missionary labour among the negroes and Indians. Applications were made to the Bishop of London for his ordination, and he had an interview with the prelate, but was rudely repulsed as a Whitefield Methodist. Franklin, who was in London representing American affairs, used his influence for him, but in vain. The

* He died in great peace, August 29, 1775, leaving a son, Joseph Habersham, Postmaster-General of the United States, who was a correspondent of Lady Huntingdon, and who died in November, 1815.—Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. chap. 40.

colonies were rebellious, and, said the apostolic bishop, "You have been a preacher with Mr. Whitefield, which is illegal. When you return to America let me know!" Winter replied: "My lord, I cannot think of returning without ordination." "Very well," rejoined the bishop, with a significant bow; "and thus they parted till the day of judgment."

A day of fasting and prayer was observed in all the chapels of the Countess in behalf of their cause in Georgia. In 1772, having bought up all claims of heirs-at-law to Whitefield's property in the province, she formed the design of appointing a principal and a pastor for the Orphan House, and of despatching with them a corps of preachers to prosecute the evangelization of the southern colonies. She issued a Circular, calling upon all the ministers and students in her Connexion to meet at Trevecca, there to examine such pupils as might volunteer for the service; to consecrate the projected measure with religious exercises; and to "plan out the work of the Connexion more effectually in England, North and South Wales, and Ireland." Accordingly, on the 9th of October, another memorable jubilee began in the ancient castle of Trevecca.

Accompanied by eminent clergymen and laymen, she was met on the route by students from the college, and many visitors wending their way from various parts of the country toward the Welsh Methodist Mount Zion. On their arrival they were received by the students with the hymn, "Welcome, welcome, blessed servants," and with prayer at their entrance; and at dinner the students sang, "Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim." A sermon was preached in the evening, and the day was closed with singing and prayers. Public services were begun the next day, and were continued for a fortnight. Independently of the American mission, the occasion was one of great local benefit, and of general advantage to the Calvinistic cause, by the revision of its interests in all the United Kingdom.

A missionary band was organized, and on the 27th of October sailed from Blackwall to Gravesend, for America. It was one of the earliest of those sublime spectacles of missionary embarkation which, from the impulse that Methodism was then giving to English Protestantism, have now become common. Before their departure the missionaries preached daily to vast crowds in the Tabernacle, in Tottenham Court Road Chapel, and in the open air on Tower Hill. The religious community of the metropolis was stirred by the occasion, and it was not inaptly called "*The Methodist Jubilee.*" An embarkation hymn, written by Shirley, was

printed for the ceremony.* Immense throngs crowded the river's side; and, when the ship started, a solemn and affecting scene was presented. Every countenance was suffused with tears; hats and handkerchiefs were to be seen waving in all directions, "bidding these servants of God farewell; and prayers and wishes ascended as a cloud of incense to the great Head of the Church, recommending them to his merciful protection and care. Such a Spirit of prayer and supplication was poured out upon the people of God at this interesting period as has seldom been remembered. Every heart was affected; and the impressions then made were attended with the most beneficial results."

Though the trans-Atlantic design of the mission was not to be ultimately successful, yet it can never lose its interest as an illustration of the renovated evangelism of the times. "A remarkable outpouring of the Spirit," wrote the Countess, attended the scene, and "nothing was ever so blessed as the spirit with which they all went."

In six weeks the missionary band arrived at Savannah, and were received at Whitefield's Orphan House, from which they soon went forth in all directions, preaching the "everlasting Gospel" with "signs following." They did extensive and profitable work, travelling about the country and labouring with all denominations. "Their labours were crowned with singular success, and many by their ministry received the light of the Gospel." They devoted themselves especially to the salvation of the African population. They strengthened the feeble and incipient churches on the southern frontiers of the country, and "aroused the dormant zeal of many to send the Gospel to their heathen neighbours," the aborigines.

During several years did these laborious missionaries prosecute their good work. The provincial government took an interest in their plans, and offered to build a church in Savannah, and present it to the Countess. "The invitations," she wrote, "which I have for our ministry in various parts of America, are so kind and affectionate, that it looks as if we were to have our way free through the whole continent;" "in all the back settlements we are assured that the people will build us chapels at their own expense." She organized a plan, which was encouraged by Lord Dartmouth, for a large grant of lands from the government for the endowment of extensive missions; and ministerial reinforcements were to be sup-

* This poem was reproduced in the Evangelical Magazine, 1796, when the missionary ship "Duff" left England for the South Seas. It begins: "Go, destined vessel, heavenly freighted, go!"

plied from Trevecca, to meet the wants of the spiritually destitute regions of the country.*

The prospect was that Calvinistic Methodism would thus spread out over the southern portion of the colonies, and soon meet Arminian Methodism, which was now on its southward march. But it was otherwise designed in the counsels of Divine Providence. Methodism was to extend its sway over all those regions, but not with a divided interest. The Revolutionary war was looming not far in the distance, and the New World was to have its own Methodism as well as its own government. The Orphan House was destroyed by fire. After eight years of service the missionaries, following the example of most of the regular English clergy of the colonies, escaped to England in the British Convoy, at the reduction of Charleston. The property of the Countess was finally appropriated by the Americans, and the southern field was left unoccupied and open for the American Arminian Methodists, who soon after bore the cross through its length and breadth.

The Countess endeavoured, during and after the war, to recover her important estates in Georgia for missionary purposes: she corresponded with Washington respecting them; Franklin accepted an appointment as one of her trustees; Laurens, President of Congress, imprisoned for some months in the Tower of London, became her friend and adviser, and his sons undertook, on their return to America, to adjust her claims there, but without success.†

In the course of the correspondence, as also in the will of Whitefield, we are startled by some unexpected disclosures respecting his Georgia property. No small amount of it consisted of slaves, and, what is still more startling, Whitefield appears to have been largely

* Vollständige Geschichte der Methodisten in England, aus glaubwürdigen Quellen, nebst den Lebensbeschreibungen ihrer beyden Stifter der Herrn Johann Wesley und George Whitefield. Von Dr. Johann Gottlieb Burkhard, etc. Complete History of the Methodists in England, from trustworthy authorities, with the biographies of their two founders, John Wesley and George Whitefield. By John Gottlieb Burkhard, D.D., Minister of the German Church of St. Mary in the Savoy, London. Appendix I. Nurnberg, 1795. I cannot recall any allusion to this important work in any Methodist writer, early or late. Burkhard lived in London before the death of Wesley; he knew personally the Countess of Huntingdon, and wrote much of his history before their deaths. It is in two volumes in one, and is the first history of Methodism ever published, if we except the "Short History of the People called Methodists," appended by Wesley to his "Concise History of the Church." Its plan is comprehensive, and its spirit candid.

† The father of Laurens had been a correspondent and confidential adviser of Whitefield. Miss Laurens, afterwards the wife of Dr. Ramsay, the author of the Life of Washington, &c., was a personal friend of Lady Huntingdon.

responsible for the introduction of this kind of property, so called, into the province. The humane Oglethorpe had projected the colony as an asylum for unfortunate debtors, from the intolerable penal inflictions of the British Code, at that time, on such sufferers; he invited thither also all persecuted Protestants.* He placed on the common seal of the corporation the cap of liberty, and slavery was not allowed in its settlements. "Slavery," he said, "is against the Gospel as well as the fundamental law of England. We refused, as trustees, to make a law permitting such a horrid crime."† The colony was designed for hardy workmen; but "slaves," it was alleged, "starve the poor labourer."

As early as 1740 Whitefield, seeing the feebleness of the colony, advocated measures for its increase, and the first of these expedients was "an allowance of negroes." He proposed to send Seward, his travelling companion, to England, to petition the trustees of the corporation to admit slavery, and also to allow the introduction of rum.‡ He became a slave-owner, and in the year of his death there were fifty slaves, men, women, and children, belonging to his Orphan House. In his will he bequeaths to the Countess his "lands, negroes, books and furniture;"§ and, after his death, her letters to America respecting his property, continually refer to the value and sale of his slaves. Those sentiments against slavery, which afterward prevailed in the legislation of England, and which were largely owing to the influence of Methodism, were as yet quite latent. Whitefield seems to have shared the fallacious views of the good Las Casas, which, from motives of humanity, led to the most tragic scenes of inhumanity in the records of the world.

While absorbed in their schemes for America, the Calvinistic Methodists were startled by the report of the death of Howell Harris, their champion in Wales, news which was no less afflicting to their Arminian brethren; for the fervent and catholic spirit of Harris sympathized with both parties, notwithstanding his acknowledged Calvinism. Notable scenes had he passed through since we parted from him among the mobs of Bala.‖ We may pause here with interest and profit, to cast a few glances back upon the events of his memorable life.

* Harris's Memorials of Oglethorpe, chap. 7. Boston, 1841.

† Bancroft's History of the United States, vol. iii. chap. 24.

‡ Compare Seward's Journal, cited in Gillies's Whitefield, chap. 4, with Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. chap 41.

§ Ibid., vol. ii. chap. 40.

‖ See Book iii., chap. 4.

When he began his great work in Wales, evangelical piety was, as we have seen, apparently almost extinct. "There was," he says, "at that time a general slumber over the land; no one," whom he knew, "had the true knowledge of God;* a universal deluge of swearing, lying, revelling, drunkenness, fighting, and gaming, had overspread the country like a mighty torrent; and that without any notice taken of it, or a stop," as far as he had seen, "attempted to be put to it." He had "never yet known one man awakened by the preaching in the country." It was under these circumstances that he betook himself to the "highways and hedges," preaching wherever he could draw the people together, in private dwellings, in barns, in market-houses, churchyards, and on the public roads, generally three, sometimes five and six times a-day. The magistrates threatened him; the clergy preached against him, branding him with the character of a false prophet and deceiver; the mob was active; yet, he says, "during all this, I was carried, as on the wings of an eagle, triumphantly above all." Griffith Jones, establishing his itinerant schools, went likewise into the public fields, and, with his travelling schoolmasters, initiated a general reformation. Daniel Rowlands, one of the most eloquent men ever known in Wales, followed their example, and stirred the whole population with his out-door preaching. Howell Davies was soon added to the little band of evangelists, and passed among the towns and villages like a herald. The frequent incursions of Whitefield and both Wesleys redoubled the new impulse, and now "religion," says Harris, "became the common talk; places of divine worship were everywhere crowded," and those "societies were begun which have since covered the Principality with living Churches." Harris was a man of good sense, as well as ardent zeal. He was jealous of himself. "Thus I went on," he writes, "though with fear and trembling, lest others of bad intentions should take occasion to go about after my example; therefore I prayed that I might know God's will more perfectly; whether He was the only object of my love and desire, and whether His glory and the salvation of my fellow-sinners were the only objects in my view. After examining the matter I had power to rely, in all things, on the strength of the grace that is in Christ Jesus for aid to carry me through the great work; and that if His honour should call me to suffer, to be imprisoned and tortured, I should find Him faithful in every trial, in death, and to all eternity."

We find him, while pursuing his extraordinary labours and vic-

* Life of Howell Harris, Esq., Jackson's Ch. Biog., vol. xii.

tories, continually seeking strength in self-abasement at the foot of the cross. After triumphing amid the scenes of a horse-race, where he preached, opposed by shouts, and missiles, and the beating of a drum, he enters a church, where, bowing at the sacramental altar, he says: "I had a fresh sense of my poverty and vileness, so that I could cry feelingly, 'O Lord, I am the poorest, the vilest, and the unworthiest here before Thee.' And when I thus fell at my Saviour's feet, I had sweet and close communion with Him, and my soul felt a pity for all the world, a longing that they all might be born again, and be brought to the true knowledge of the Saviour of sinners. I felt that I deserved hell for not more valuing His precious blood. O the infinite value of that blood! It is the fruit of God's eternal love to sinners! Here are light, life, and liberty from the guilt and power of sin. O that I may abide here for ever!" A man of such a spirit could not be defeated. Surrounded by the madness and perils of the mob, he would say within himself, and with sublime calmness, "Thou art chained, O Satan!" As with the Methodists in England, the rioters were often led on by "gentlemen," clergymen, and magistrates. In Machynlleth, as he preached from a window, a mob, headed by an attorney and a clergyman, not only assailed him with outcries and stones, but one of them discharged a pistol at him; and when he left the town on horseback, they made a detour, and, crossing his road, "began again, he writes, "to throw sticks and stones at me, till the Lord delivered me out of their hands." "By these means," he adds, "and many other trials which I often passed through, I was at length so accustomed to them, that when I arose in the morning I was daily in expectation of my crosses." The tumults through which he advanced for some years, seem in our day hardly credible; they follow one another almost like daily skirmishes of a military campaign. At Newport the mob rushed on him with the utmost fury. They tore both his coat-sleeves, one of them quite off, and took away his peruke. "I was now," he says, "in the rain, bareheaded, under the reproach of Christ! Having a little silence, I discoursed on; but soon they shouted again, and pelted me with apples and dirt, flinging stones in the utmost rage about me. I had one blow on my forehead, which caused a rising, with a little blood. Many friends would have me give over in the tumult; but I could not be free to do that till the storm was over, and God was glorified over Satan. When we came to Caerleon every thing seemed calm and quiet, while Brother Seward," a fellow itinerant, "prayed and discoursed sweetly by the market-house; but when I began to dis-

course after him they began to roar most horribly, pelting us with dung and dirt, throwing eggs, stones, and other hard substances, even in our faces, and shouted so loud as to drown my voice entirely." Seward got a severe blow on his right eye, which caused him much pain; and, as it affected his left eye also, he was obliged to be led by the hand, blindfolded, for some days, till at last he became totally blind; but he continued to confront the mob by the side of his brave companion. "When we came to Monmouth town," continues Harris, "we had much the same treatment as we had at Newport and Caerleon. It happened to be the horse-race there, and both high and low were assembled against us. As I began to discourse on a table over against the town-hall windows, they ordered a drum to be beaten by our side; but the Lord enabled me to bear my testimony against their balls, assemblies, horse-races, whoredom, and drunkenness. The drum continued to beat, and the mob pelted us with apples, pears, stones, dirt, and a dead dog. During this storm Brother Seward was much afraid, yet he endured it with much calmness of spirit, saying, 'We had better endure this than hell.'" "And thus," adds the courageous Welshman, "all their opposition could not hinder our progress. In the strength of the Lord we went on from conquering to conquer."

Harris fought the early battles of Methodism in Wales, through scenes hardly less perilous than those which Nelson encountered in England, and with equal heroism. As he traversed North Wales, "the enemy," he says, (for these good men always accused the devil rather than the mob itself,) "the enemy was provoked at my attempt thus to propagate the Gospel in his territories, and resolved to make a stand against me, and endeavour, as much as he should be permitted, to take away my life. After prayer and consultation, I intrusted God with my life and went on." Near Bala its parish minister met him with violent threatenings, and rushed upon him with "a great club to strike" him. "I told him," says Harris, "when I was reviled I was taught not to revile again; and rode on quietly." Entering the town, he was informed that all the county mob were met together to attack him. At the request of his friends, who were more alarmed than himself, he quitted the street, and went into a house to preach. "During all this," he says, "I was happy in my soul, and full of power and courage; my voice being lifted up like a trumpet, so that the people could hear in spite of all the disturbance that was made at the door and window, which was broken to pieces by the mob." He continued his discourse for some time; but when the rabble, who had been pre-

paring themselves by excessive drinking, came among the congregation, a friend desired him to stop. He retired to an upper room; but the rioters, instead of withdrawing, appeared to be more enraged. Some surrounded the house, while others climbed to the top of it, threatening him with death as soon as he should appear. As night drew on he thought it his duty to go out among them, committing himself to the care of God; but as soon as he left the house one of the rioters seized him by the neckerchief; it gave way, and he was thus prevented from falling to the ground. Another hit him on the face, while others flung stones and dirt at him. "I then," he writes, "thought it was my lot to die Stephen's death in the midst of them. I spoke to them, and prayed for them. They still inhumanly continued to beat me with sticks and staves, and to pelt me with stones, until I fell under their merciless feet, where they continued to beat me until the Lord touched the heart of one of them with pity, or fear of being prosecuted for killing me. He swore that they should beat me no more, and rescued me out of their hands, while they were employed in giving my friends the like treatment. Although they were able to make effectual resistance, they imitated Christ the Lord in bearing all patiently, as I desired them to do. So at last we came together to our lodging, and dressed our wounds; and there also I exhorted my fellow-sufferers; and we rejoiced together that we were counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake."

On the following Sunday he stood in a church in Carnarvonshire, and heard himself denounced, in a sermon preached by the "Chancellor," as a minister of the devil, an enemy to God, to the Church, and to all mankind. The enraged Churchman called upon the people "to join unanimously against such a man;" the people obeyed their teacher, and as Harris passed from the church for his horse many stones were flung at him; "but," he writes, "the Lord saved me from receiving any considerable harm, and kept them from laying violent hands upon me. Thus I was greatly endangered all this week, and often thought that I should not be permitted to return alive from this country."

He frequently passed over the line into England, where similar trials beset him. While preaching at Swindon, with Cennick, they were assailed by the mob, who "went the length of their chain" in venting their rage upon him. They brought horns, guns, and a fire-engine. "When they presented a gun to my forehead," he says, "my soul was happy; I could cheerfully stand as a mark for them." A ruffian struck him on his mouth till the blood came;

but God was pleased to endow him with uncommon patience and meekness, and "great power to speak to the people, and many listened with great seriousness." After the sermon the itinerants walked up into the town, exhorting those who opposed them, though smeared with mire, gunpowder, and the muddy water thrown by the engine. They were followed by a wondering concourse of poor husbandmen and mechanics; and when they had borrowed a change of clothes, and had washed themselves, Harris again came forth and preached to the crowds who lingered in the yard of the house where he was entertained. Such was the spirit of this extraordinary man; and it was what the times required. His renewed appeal had immediate effect. "I am persuaded," he says, "that some of them were convinced of sin; and they begged us earnestly to come to a village about a mile distant, which we promised if God would so permit. Then we went to that village, where the word of God runs and is glorified."

We could not estimate aright those times, or the blessings which we owe to Methodism, or the men to whose heroism and labours we are indebted for it, without a record of such facts. It required hardly less fortitude, perhaps more, to pass unquailingly through such scenes, than it did for the ancient Christians to face the horrors of the Colosseum. Troops on the battle-field know no equal tests of courage.*

The moral strength of the suffering evangelist grew under his trials. "O what experience," he exclaims sublimely, "I gained by this perilous journey! The Lord by degrees continued to show me more of the height, depth, length, and breadth of His love in Christ; and led me to know, by experience, more of his sufferings, death, and resurrection, love, and faithfulness. . . . The cross was burdensome to my flesh; but I felt my soul growing sweetly under it. . . . My faith and love increased more and more in beholding the glory of the God-Man, whom I now beheld clearly the wonder of all worlds, the terror of devils, the delight of angels, and the real and only hope of poor sinners."

* "It was by field-preaching, and in no other possible way, that England could be roused from its spiritual slumber, or Methodism spread over the country, and rooted where it spread. The men who commenced and achieved this arduous service, and they were scholars and gentlemen, displayed a courage far surpassing that which carries the soldier through the hail-storm of the battle-field. Ten thousand might more easily be found who would confront a battery, than two who, with the sensitiveness of education about them, could mount a table by the roadside, give out a psalm, and gather a mob."—Isaac Taylor's Wesley and Methodism, p. 34.

By such labours and sufferings did the Welsh apostle and his co-labourers wake up the whole Principality, renovate its Nonconformity, rouse into life the dead Establishment within it, and spread living piety among its towns and villages. A Churchman of our day, pleading for the return of the Welsh Methodists to the Establishment, acknowledges that, "if their object was to awaken, the Church has been thoroughly awakened; if to reform, she is, in great measure at least, reformed."*

Not until his own labours and those of Jones, Rowlands, Davies, and the Whitefield and Wesleyan itinerants, had, to a great extent, reclaimed the Christianity of his country, did Harris cease to traverse its mountains and valleys, and to confront the mobs of its demoralized populace. It must be remembered that he was a layman, having never received orders in the Church, (to which, like Wesley, he was faithful to the end,) or licence from any of the Dissenters. He was known by the title of Howell Harris, Esq.; so his memoirs call him, and so he is named on his tombstone at Trevecca—a lay evangelist, a memorable example for such through all coming time. When Methodism had become established, and organized more or less, throughout Wales, and its regular labourers were abroad, generally, in its towns and villages, and his own health had failed, Harris located himself at Trevecca, where his home became a sort of Moravian community, thronged with devout inmates, and the head-quarters of a powerful religious influence, which went forth into most of the country. We get occasional glimpses of the domicile and its holy life, its charities and local labours, in the Methodist writings of the times; but never without an eager interest for fuller information. Wesley, pursuing his itinerant ministration in Wales, pauses at it occasionally with pleasure. "Howell Harris's house," he says, "is one of the most elegant places which I have seen in Wales. The little chapel, and all things round about it, are finished with an uncommon taste; and the gardens, orchards, fish-ponds, and mount adjoining, make the place a little paradise. He thanks God for these things, and looks through them. About six score persons are now in the family, all diligent, all constantly employed, all fearing God and working righteousness."† And at another visit he writes: "In the evening several of us retired into the neighbouring wood, which is exceeding pleasantly laid out in walks, one of which leads to a little mount, raised in the midst of a meadow, that

* Article on Methodism in Wales, Quarterly Review, 1849.
† Wesley's Works, vol. iii.

commands a delightful prospect. This is Howell Harris's work, who has likewise greatly enlarged and beautified his house; so that, with the gardens, orchards, walks, and pieces of water that surround it, it is a kind of little paradise." Wesley's piety never perverted his taste; the comforts and even the pleasures of life were ever beautiful to him when they were consecrated by "prayer and thanksgiving."

Harris's Trevecca home became a sort of Mount Zion to Wales, "beautiful for situation." Many of his religious friends and converts resorted to it, and joined their resources and labours with his to sustain the common household. He preached to them daily, sometimes when he was not able to move from the chair from which he addressed them. A "great number of people flocked to him from all parts, many of them under conviction, merely to hear the word, and others partly from curiosity; the report of his preaching daily at Trevecca having spread throughout Wales."* He soon had a hundred resident under his roof: the men working on two hired farms, the women spinning wool and attending to the domestic cares, and he preaching to them every morning as soon as the family arose. Good men often sent him donations of ten, twenty, and a hundred pounds for the expenses of the establishment. Many families settled on farms in the neighbourhood to enjoy its religious advantages. Several evangelical labourers, exhorters or lay preachers, were raised up in the family, and went forth continually proclaiming the truth in the adjacent villages. Many went up, from the domestic sanctuary, rejoicing, to the "building of God, eternal in the heavens;" "praising," says one of the inmates, "and testifying of Jesus, how dear and precious He was to them in their dying moments; that they beheld eternity bright and glorious before them, through the blood of Christ; blessing Him for his love and grace, and for having brought them to Trevecca, where they found edification for their souls. This afforded much comfort and joy to them that were yet left in this vale of misery, seeing their dear brethren and sisters depart, strong in faith, to their eternal home."

The experiment was perilous; yet no evil, but much good, seems to have resulted from it. Socialistic schemes are never successful except when conducted on theocratic principles; but Harris was a high priest among his followers, and was reverently obeyed in all things.

The staunch old Puritan spirit lingered, and still lingers, among

* Harris's Life, Jackson's Chr. Biog., vol. xii.

the mountains of Wales. Methodism itself never favoured Quakerism on the question of war. Wesley, as we have seen, recommended his people to study the military exercise, and offered to raise Methodist troops for the government, when his country was threatened with invasion by Papal powers. The sword, though so fearfully abused, he deemed the last right of the people for the defence of their liberties and faith. Harris shared these sentiments, and when the Protestantism of the realm was menaced by a threatened invasion from France, "he laid this matter before the family, especially the young men, inquiring whether or not any of them had a willing mind and spirit to go into the service of the king against popery; entreating them to be earnest with the Lord in prayer for His aid and defence at this critical juncture." Soon after he had made the proposition, many of them answered that they were willing and ready; and it was then settled that five young men should go into the army. "They went in faith, and in the strength of the Lord, willing to lay down their lives for the liberty of the Gospel." These five young Methodists showed that they possessed the spirit which Haime, Staniforth, Bond, and their religious comrades, had so heroically exhibited at Fontenoy. They went from Trevecca, attended with the prayers of their brethren, to Hereford, where they entered a regiment, as Christian patriots. They were sent to Ireland, and thence to Nova Scotia. They fought at the siege of Louisburgh, where they joined the puritan troops of Boston, who bore on their flag the inscription, *Nil desperandum, Christo duce*—"Fear nothing while Christ is Captain"—given to them by Whitefield. They were with Wolfe at the taking of Quebec,—by which English Protestantism took possession of the North. Sailing to the south, they helped to take Havana from the Spaniards—the last blow in that important war. One of their brethren at Trevecca piously remarks: "The Lord Jesus was with their spirits in a surprising manner. They kept close together in watching and prayer, reading the Bible, exhorting one another and their fellow-soldiers. They wrote home from Quebec, that they had the spirit of prayer and reliance on the Lord, even in the heat of the battles; because, say they, 'We are in His care, and entered upon this way of life for Him, fighting against popery, in defence of our Gospel privileges.' Thus they were kept by our Saviour, contented and happy in their spirits, and in their bodies also, not receiving any material hurt."

The devout household, praying constantly for their absent brethren, were one day surprised by the arrival of one of them, after

seven years' absence and perils. He came alone, for the rest were not, the Lord having taken them; "but," says the family chronicler, "he was gladly received by all, as it was a matter of great joy to see him, more especially as the Lord's presence had been with him, keeping him, not only from the vice and wickedness which most commonly prevail in the army, but also in the way to heaven, growing in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." He brought a most pleasing account of them that finished their course, and of the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus to himself and to them in all their trials. None of his comrades had fallen in battle; two of them died and were buried at Halifax, "very happy in their spirits," believing and testifying of the Lord Jesus that He is faithful to His promise: the third died at sea, the fourth at Havana. The survivor had been taken prisoner to France, but on the declaration of peace reached England, where his services were appreciated and preferment offered him; but "he chose rather to come home, so he came directly to Trevecca."*

After these young men had gone forth from Trevecca to serve their country, the Welsh if not the Christian spirit of Harris himself, was roused by new alarms of an invasion from France. Being a layman, gentlemen of his county, who knew his courage and his influence, proffered him a commission. He considered it entirely from a Christian point of view. He submitted the proposal to his large family; and, after much prayer, they bade him go, and commended him to God. Twenty-four men of the household went with him; twelve of them at his own expense for three years. He had stipulated that he must be allowed to preach the Gospel among the troops wherever he should go. This conceded, he marched with his brethren, being made an ensign, and soon after a captain. "I am," he wrote, in a strain which would have delighted Cromwell, "resolutely and coolly determined to go freely and conscientiously, and die in the field of battle in defence of the precious word of God, the Bible, against Popery. Who can sufficiently set forth the value of a book wherein God speaks? and that to all ranks, degrees, ages, and languages of men. Who can set it forth in its own majesty and glory? Oh, the infinite and unfathomable depth of glory, and divine wisdom, and love in it! A book which He has made the

* "He is still alive," says a writer in 1791, "and continues an honest, faithful servant in the house of God; and has much to speak, as an exhorter, about the grace of the good Shepherd of Israel. He carries a musket-ball in his leg, yet he is very happy and contented; a living witness of the Lord's faithfulness and love."—Harris's Life, Jackson's Chr. Biog., vol. xii. p. 168.

standard and rule to try even His own work by ; whereby all spirits, doctrine, ministry, and Church discipline ; all faith, love, truth, and obedience are proved—a book that God has referred all men to, from the monarch to the peasant, and has made the universal teacher of men. Here is the seed whence the Church and her faith are begotten ; and herein is she purified and nursed : here is the believer's armoury ; herein is the true, ineffable light of the world. Oh, that its glory may fill this nation ! No wonder so many thousands have triumphed in dying for the precious Bible. Now I go freely, without compulsion, to show the regard I have for the privileges we enjoy under our best of kings, our ineffable privileges, especially the precious Gospel of our Saviour, contained in the book of God, which now is openly read throughout the kingdom. I commit my family to the Lord, and am going with a part of it (who freely offer their lives on this occasion) to defend our nation and privileges ; and to show publicly that we are dead to all things here below, or, at least, 'that we can part with all for the sake of our Lord and Saviour, even with life itself ; and that we seek a city above.'" Men of such a spirit could not fail to be heroes.

He spent three years marching about the kingdom with his regiment, and preaching continually in his regimentals. Wesley and other Methodist itinerants, as they met him on their routes, were welcomed by him, and addressed his men. His character as an officer enabled him to preach with less molestation from the mob than he would have encountered without that distinction ; and he was successful, with the aid of his Methodist troops, in introducing Methodism into places where it had been hitherto successfully repelled by persecution. A remarkable example is recorded by a contemporary Wesleyan preacher.* On the arrival of his regiment at Yarmouth he immediately inquired if there were any Methodists in the town, and was informed that attempts had been made by them to preach there, but that the itinerants had very narrowly escaped violent deaths from the enraged populace. Nothing daunted by this intelligence, he employed the town-crier to give notice, that on a given day and hour a Methodist would preach at the Market-place. At the time appointed a large mob collected, furnished with stones, brickbats, bludgeons, blood, and filth, vowing that if the preacher came he should never depart alive. Harris, who had been exercising his men at a little distance, went to the multitude, when the clock struck, and inquired what was the matter. They replied that a Methodist preacher was to have come, but it was well that

* Rev. James Wood in Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1825, p. 308.

he had not, for he certainly would have been killed. He told them he thought it a pity they should be wholly disappointed, and that, if they would favour him with their attention, he would sing a hymn and pray with them, and also give them a little friendly advice. He then mounted a table which had been prepared for him; his men, who surrounded him with their arms, joining him most devoutly in singing and prayer. The novelty of the scene, and the presence of armed troops, who were ready to defend their officer and their friend, struck terror into the mob, and prevented the execution of their design. Harris preached with his usual power; many of his hearers were visibly affected; "prejudices vanished, and some were awakened to a serious concern for their souls, and led to inquire how they might be saved." From that time he preached nearly every evening with increasing effect, and afterwards sent to the itinerants in the neighbourhood to come to Yarmouth and form a society. His request was readily met, and a zealous Church was formed. A commodious chapel was built by a gentleman of the town, and let to them at a yearly rent, and two local preachers were raised up. "The word of God had free course; it ran and was glorified." Wesley visited them, and after severe struggles, during which the society seemed repeatedly on the brink of destruction, Methodism was established in the town, never, it is hoped, to be overthrown.

At the end of the war Harris retired to his domestic sanctuary at Trevecca, where a hundred and twenty inmates had maintained the daily preaching and other meetings, and "the outward affairs of the family had gone on regularly at the same time." Besides the charge of his numerous household, he was incessantly devoted to the welfare of Lady Huntingdon's college at Trevecca. We have seen him prominent in its anniversary jubilees.

His health at last declined rapidly, and the decease of some of his old fellow-labourers and fellow-sufferers in the Gospel, admonished him that he too must depart hence. The news of Whitefield's death enforced the warning. The same year also died his faithful Welsh coadjutor, Howell Davies.* Davies was, like Jones, Rowlands, and Harris, a good Churchman, but entered with his might into the Methodistic movement, preaching not only in Wales, but in Lady Huntingdon's chapels in England.† He was educated by Jones, who died some nine years before him, but not without having been instrumental in teaching one hundred and fifty thou-

* Evangelical Magazine for 1814.

† Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, *passim*.

sand Welshmen to read the Scriptures during his lifetime, by his itinerant schools. Davies was ever faithful to his training. His first church was in Pembrokeshire, but his Methodism was offensive to the formalism of his parishioners, and he was soon turned out. He became rector of Prengast, where he preached in four different places statedly, besides daily labours in fields, on mountain sides, in barns, and private houses. He had more than two thousand communicants, and it is said that his church had often to be emptied twice to make way for a third congregation to receive the Lord's Supper from his hands. His name is of continual recurrence in the contemporary Methodist writings, for he was a tireless labourer, a "burning and a shining light."*

Harris now prepared to follow these, his old associates, into the rest that remaineth for the people of God. Through months of agonizing disease he lingered at its gate, longing to enter, but ministering meanwhile sublime words of consolation and exhortation to the brethren he was about to leave. "I find," he said, "the Saviour's will is my heaven, be it what it may; but I have, I think from Him, insatiable cries to go home, out of this body, to my Father, Saviour, and Comforter. I feel my spirit eats His words, and I could wash the feet of His servants. My spirit adores Him for giving me a hope that I shall come into His presence; that my work is done; that I am at the door; and that I, a poor sinner, that have nothing but sin, should lay hold of His righteousness, and wisdom, and strength, for I have nothing of my own. . . . My spirit is like one at the door, waiting to be called in. I could have no access to ask for any thing, but that I may go home, and that He would make haste, and make no long tarrying." And again: "I feel that He, and not any thing here, is my rest and happiness. I love eternity because He is there. I speak with

* He had to struggle with poverty as with persecution. "As he was walking early on a Lord's-day to preach, he was accosted on the road by a clergyman on horseback, who was on the same errand, but from a different motive. The latter gentleman was complaining that the drudgery of his profession was unprofitable, for he never could get above half a guinea for preaching. The honest Welshman replied that he preached for a crown. The hireling retorted and said, 'You are a disgrace to the cloth.' 'Perhaps,' said Davies, 'I shall be held in greater disgrace, in your estimation, when I inform you that I am now going nine miles to preach, and have but sevenpence in my pocket to bear my expenses out and in, and do not expect the poor pittance remitted that I am now in possession of. But I look forward for that *crown of glory* which my Lord and Saviour will freely bestow upon me when he makes his appearance before an assembled world.'"—Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. i. chap. 27.

and cry to Him. O the thickness of this flesh which hides Him from me! O thou who didst bleed to death, and who art alive, come and take me home! I feel that my spirit goes to God, not as His creature, but as His child, and the purchase of His blood. My Saviour did shine on me sweetly this afternoon. O let me eat no more of the bread that perisheth; be thou to me, from henceforth, my bread and food for ever! Be thou to me my sun, and let me see this no more! O hear the cries of thy poor worm! thy blood has done the work; take me from this body of clay, for I am here in prison. O take me there, where thou showest thy glory; and indulge a worm, sick of love, longing to come home! This is following Jesus. We are come to mount Sion, and I am on Mount Sion; I saw great glory before in that God-man Jesus, but nothing compared with what I now behold in Him?" When he was in the greatest pain, he often cried out, "O this cup! Blessed be God for this last cup! Jesus drank it all for me. I shall soon be with that God who died for me, to save me to all eternity." On the ceiling of his chamber was inscribed in gilt letters, the Hebrew name of God—the ineffable name; it flashed upon his dying gaze.* "Thus," says one who stood by his bedside, "he went home to rest in the Lord, July 21st, 1773, in the sixtieth year of his age."

"Mr. Harris," wrote Lady Huntingdon to Romaine, "has gone home in triumph." A grand scene was presented in Trevecca at his funeral, such as no jubilee of the college had ever witnessed. The news of his death spread rapidly over the country, and thousands of pilgrims wended their way to the consecrated place, praying, weeping, and also rejoicing; for their great apostle had fought a good fight, and had left them with the crown of glory upon his brow. The day of his interment, says the Countess, "was one never to be forgotten, and ought to be remembered with holy wonder and gratitude, for the special seasons of divine influence" which attended it. The town was filled. Twenty thousand people were present, and preachers and exhorters flocked to the solemn ceremony from all directions. Three stages were erected in the open air, and nine sermons delivered from them to the vast multitudes, hundreds of whom were dissolved in tears. Fifteen clergymen were present, six of whom, says the Countess in characteristic style, "blew the Gospel trumpet with great power and freedom. Though we had enjoyed much of the gracious presence of God in our assemblies before, yet I think I never saw

* The chamber and its inscription are still preserved intact, and visited by many pilgrims.

so much at any time as on that day; the Lord's Supper was administered, and God poured out His Spirit in a wonderful manner. Many old Christians told me they had never seen so much of the glory of the Lord and the riches of His grace, nor felt so much of the power of the Gospel before." It seemed a spiritual festival, and the weeping yet exulting thousands bore the warrior to his grave in triumph.

A memorable sentence, which justifies the detail with which his life has been treated in our pages, is inscribed on his tombstone at Trevecca: "He was the first itinerant preacher of redemption, in this period of revival, in England and Wales." He had preached thirty-nine years, and began his out-door labours before Whitefield stood upon Mount Hannam. Whitefield, immediately after he had taken the open field at Kingswood, passed, as we have seen, into Wales, where he found Harris preaching at large, and brought him into alliance with the Methodistic movement.*

And thus one after another of these wonderful men passed away, with deaths as sublime as their lives were alleged to be fanatical. And "their works do follow them!" Wales witnesses to-day, in all her towns and villages, to the usefulness of their labours and sufferings. We have already noticed, with some minuteness, the religious results of their ministrations. † A hostile authority has acknowledged that the public character of the Principality has been changed by them; that even an extraordinary impulse has been given to a purely native school of thought and literature; that not only numerous editions of the Bible, concordances, hymn-books, and tracts of a missionary nature, but newspapers, magazines, and treatises on popular topics, such as geography and agriculture, stream yearly from the Welsh press; that those who imagine the Welsh intellect asleep, or the language inoperative as a medium of instruction, have still to read a chapter in contemporary history; that "this influx of fresh thought is even expanding the language, which is evidently growing and enriched daily by the formation of self-evolved words, especially such as denote abstraction and generalization."‡

Mighty men still survived in Wales to prosecute the reformation, and mightiest among them was Daniel Rowlands, rector of Llangeitho, and chaplain to the Duke of Leinster. He began his "irregular" labours almost as early as Howell Harris, and has

* See their first interview, book ii. chap. 1.
† Book ii. chap. 1, and book iv. chap. 7.
‡ Quarterly Review, 1849; Art., Methodism in Wales.

been pronounced his "twin founder of Welsh Methodism;" he "did for Wales whatever Whitefield did for England, and perhaps something more." * He had entered the ministry of the Establishment a godless man, and, being gigantic in body, he descended from the pulpit to excel in the Sunday athletic games of his parishioners. Griffith Jones crossed his path. Rowlands went to hear him through curiosity, mixed with scorn; his biographers describe him as standing before the preacher, in front of the pulpit, with a look of disdain, which soon changed to seriousness, and at last to penitence; and the old evangelist saw in him "already an Elisha, who, he prayed, might be destined to succeed him." He now became a changed man; his preaching became more powerful than that of his teacher; it is described as like "thunder" among the Welsh mountains. The worst men were struck under it, as he himself had been by the word of Jones; and we "soon hear of an ungodly squire, who came with hounds and huntsmen to church, undergoing the same conversion as he had himself experienced during a single sermon." A devout woman, who went twenty miles to hear him every Sunday, induced him to extend his labours, at first in churches, wherever he could obtain permission, and, when this was refused, in private houses. Persecution was roused against him in his parish, and a rival assembly of foot-ball players and wrestlers was attempted: it was an important event in his history, for he went forth and courageously confronted them, and thus began his open air preaching, which he maintained during a quarter of a century, "thundering" continually among the Welsh hills. Jones, Harris, Whitefield, and Wesley soon recognized him, and he, too, became known as one of the Methodists who were "turning the world upside down." He made frequent detours through the mountainous regions of Wales and into England, preaching in the Methodist chapels and in the open air, but mean time served, with a salary of ten pounds a-year, his two churches, and occasionally a third. They were crowded, aisles, porticoes, and yards. Multitudes followed him from one town to another, not returning home till late in the night, or the next morning, and often without eating anything from Sunday morning till Monday, for the small villages could not supply food for the vast gatherings.† His overwhelming eloquence kindled the fervid Welsh with enthusiasm, and those ardent "shoutings" which have attended

* Quarterly Review, 1849; Art., Methodism in Wales.

† Hanes Bywyd Daniel Rowlands. Gan y Parchedig, John Owen. Life of Daniel Rowlands, by Rev. J. Owen, page 24. Caerleon, 1839.

Methodism in all parts of the world, broke spontaneously from the assembled thousands who wept around him. Even in repeating the church service—"By thine agony and bloody sweat; by thy cross and passion"—tears and convulsive sobs, followed by cries of *Gogoniant* (Glory!) and *Bendigédig* (Blessed!) broke out and ran through the multitude like a contagious fever. The devout reader of the Methodist correspondence of those times, catches and kindles with the exultant spirit of these suffering but faithful men. One of them, writing to the Countess of Huntingdon respecting the preaching of Rowlands, says: "He spoke wonderfully on Abraham *looking up*, Gen. xxii. 13. I never heard such a sermon before. Surely he is the greatest preacher in Europe. May the Lord own him more and more! The place rang with *Gogoniant*. Keep on, blessed Jesus, to ride triumphantly through our land. Fill our cold hearts with thy love, then we shall praise thee from shore to shore. . . . Some of the people made our little town ring with *Gogoniant i Fab Dafydd! Hosanna trwy'r ne foedd! Hosanna hefyd trwy'r! Dœar, Dœar. Amen, Amen.* Glory be to the Son of David! Hosanna through the heavens! Hosanna also through the earth! Amen, Amen." * Though the Welsh revival had hitherto been prosecuted mostly by Churchmen, this habit of "shouting" seems to have generally prevailed, and not only in the field assemblies but in the dying hours of the Welsh Methodists. Wesley's itinerants, toiling and nearly perishing among the wintry storms of the Cimbrian hills, were inspirited for their heroic labours by the ardour of Rowlands' converts. One of these "helpers," after passing through incredible hardships, relates with thankfulness an affecting example which fired his soul with courage to suffer on even unto death if required. Six or seven persons belonging to one of Rowlands' societies were assembled for prayer, in a house by the side of a river, after a great storm. Suddenly the stream rose and overflowed its banks. The house was built of timber, and was soon swept away, with all who were in it. A young man got upon the top of the brick chimney. The neighbours, seeing him in this situation, came to the water-side; but, having no boat, they could afford him no relief. Though there was nothing before him but certain death, for the waters were rising overwhelmingly, he continued singing and shouting in Welsh, with all his might, *Gogoniant! Gogoniant!* "Glory! Glory!" till a wreck of a bridge struck against the building, and dashed it to pieces. "He fell into the water, and followed his companions into

* Letter of Rev. David Jones, Life of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. chap. 32.

a blessed eternity. But, before he fell, he cried to the people on the shore that all his companions within went off praising God in like manner.*

Rowlands' irregular labours provoked warnings from his bishop, and at last his licence was revoked; but he went forth over the land with only the more zeal. And now, says a Churchman, "From every part of Wales—from the mouth of the Wye up to the Dovey and the Conway—people flocked, like the Israelites to Jerusalem, in order to hear the eloquence and receive the sacrament from the hands of one who had acquired the dignity of a martyr." The appearance of mountain valleys, threaded by vast numbers of simple people from afar, is described as most picturesque and affecting. These multitudes, hungry and thirsty, their souls fainting on the way, were refreshed by the glad tidings which they heard, and the usual organization of Methodism followed.†

Rowlands survived Harris about twenty years, and conducted the revival with unflagging energy. Charles, of Bala, survived him still longer, and gave to "Calvinistic Methodism" the ecclesiastical organization which has preserved it among his countrymen from that absorption by which it has almost disappeared in England. He too was a Churchman, but could find no sanction for his "irregular" labours from his ecclesiastical superiors. "Being turned out," he says, "of three churches in this country, without prospect of another, what shall I do?" But God showed him what to do; at a later date, after the Establishment learned to appreciate him, he could write: "I might have been preferred in the Church; it has been repeatedly offered me; but I really would rather have spent the last twenty-three years of my life as I have, wandering up and down our cold and barren country, than to have been made an archbishop. It was no choice of mine; it was Providence that led me to it." He became an archbishop to Wales in the best sense, and with the best honour of the title. The phrase, "Calvinistic Methodists," survives as a denominational title in Wales alone; it is the legal style of the strongest form of Dissent in the Principality; and all Wales is dotted with the chapels of societies which justly boast of Jones, Harris, Rowlands, Davies, and Charles, as their founders. They supplied the cottages of their country with the word of God, and, by the demand which they excited for the Bible, led to the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, by which, and its noble offspring, the

* Life of John Prickard, in "Lives of Early Methodist Preachers."
† Quarterly Review, 1849; Art., Methodism in Wales.

American Bible Society, their sound has gone out into all the world.

Such are our final notices of Calvinistic Methodism in America and in Wales; of its further history in England we must be content with few and rapid outlines. Romaine, Venn, Berridge, and their associates, continued to prosecute the revival in different parts of the kingdom, as well as in their own parishes, and new labourers were continually joining them, some from the Trevecca college, some in the Dissenting pulpits, and others in the Establishment. As Calvinistic Methodism had scarcely any organized form, the relation of these evangelists to each other, and to the Countess of Huntingdon, was more of a moral than of an ecclesiastical character; they bore, however, in common, the reproach and title of Methodists, were bound together in sympathy and labours as such, and the Calvinistic work of Methodism moved on in unity under their harmonious co-operation.

In 1775 the Countess made an excursion into Cornwall, where Wesley and his helpers had been breaking up the fallow ground with great success for many years. Her influence was useful, not only among the Dissenters, but among the Calvinistic Churchmen of that region, and in a few years twenty congregations were gathered into her Connexion, chiefly by the labours of her students. The venerable Walker of Truro, whose name so frequently appears in the early Methodist records, had laboured for the promotion of genuine religion in the county; but his close adherence to the Church had limited his usefulness. His congregation suffered by the less evangelical ministry of his successors; but a large portion of them found shelter under the ministration of the preachers of Lady Huntingdon, and formed at last a Dissenting Church, converting a building which had been used for fifty years as a cock-pit into a chapel, and subsequently erecting a commodious edifice for a second congregation.* Thence her Connexion spread out, more or less, through the West of England.

Meanwhile De Courcy had been presented to the curacy of St. Alkmond, Shrewsbury, and now made it a centre of evangelization, as Grimshaw had made Haworth, and Berridge, Everton. It is evident, from what has already been said of him, that this zealous Churchman had within him the genuine energy for a Methodistic propagandist. He preached with undaunted courage and powerful effect, not only in Lady Huntingdon's chapels, but in the open air. He wrote to the Countess from the midst of mobs, to express his

* Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. chap. 50.

gratitude to the Lord for placing him under her ladyship's protection, and records some of his preaching "adventures" in Sussex. At one place (Hurst) he says the whole town was in commotion, as if invaded by a foreign enemy, as soon as he and his companions appeared in the streets. It was with much difficulty he could get a chair to stand on. As he proceeded in his discourse some laughed, some shouted, others brought out a table with liquor, and began to sing round it, while others blew a horn: and while he invited the multitude to drink "freely of the water of life," a jocose rioter came to him with a mug of ale in his hand, begging he would drink with him. "In the midst of all this," he says, "the Lord made me as bold as a lion, so that I was enabled to bear an awful testimony against these scoffers, and had the pleasure to see many of them so far cut down by the word that they were silent for some time. . . . Notwithstanding the tumult, many were deeply attentive and much affected; and I have since heard that a man in the town has made an offer of any part of his house for us to meet in whenever we go again." At Laughton he stood up under a venerable tree and preached: "We stood," he says, "on an eminence, and made the hills and vales re-echo with the praises of the Lamb. It was a blessed season. Many were much affected, and, after I had concluded, begged hard for one sermon more. I have given them a promise, and hope soon to fulfil it, for I long once more to stand under that same tree. The work in Sussex calls aloud for more labourers. It is impossible for me to give your Ladyship any idea of the universal thirst there is for the Gospel, on every side of us, in the country parts. . . . Sussex," he adds, "seems to be on fire: and though the devil strives to extinguish the sacred flame, yet, glory be to God! it receives additional strength from every fresh flood poured on it, and burns the brighter. The Lord is reviving his work in the hearts of some here who have lost ground; he blesses us in every meeting. Yesterday was one of the days of the Son of Man. Oathall Church was as full as it could hold, and the Lord was in the midst of us. The word was as a fire. I preached at eight in the morning five miles from Oathall; at eleven, at Oathall; at six, at Brighthelmstone; and the Lord gave me such strength of body and spirit that he enabled me to go through the whole like a giant refreshed with new wine."

It was in 1774 that he obtained the vicarage of St. Alkmond, and immediately his labours spread a sensation throughout his parish and its vicinity. He was attacked in a sarcastic poem,

entitled "St. Alkmond's Ghost;" the Antipedobaptists took offence at his preaching, and kept him busy with a controversy during several years. He was noted for his pulpit oratory, as well as his irregular labours; his language is said to have been polished, his elocution graceful, his manner dignified, and his discourses furnished "some of the most finished examples of sacred eloquence."*

One of the most notable men of the Establishment in the last century became associated with Calvinistic Methodism about this period. He had been a sailor before the mast, and, on becoming captain of a vessel, prosecuted several voyages in the slave-trade, plunged into almost every enormity, and was the last man that the most hopeful charity would have supposed could ever be reclaimed, much less become a bright and shining light in the English pulpit. "There goes John Newton, had it not been for the grace of God," he exclaimed to a friend as, in later life, they passed a criminal on his way to execution. During the worst of his excesses, however, Newton could not extinguish the admonitions of his conscience; he abandoned the sea, began an indefatigable course of self-education, and, though he had been but two years at school in all his life, he acquired a knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages, and became a well-informed theologian. He applied for orders in the Church, but was refused by the Archbishop of York because of his connection with the Methodists in Warwickshire and Yorkshire, where he had laboured extensively. He now spent seven or eight years in exhorting, and expounding the Scriptures, wherever he could obtain an opportunity, in Liverpool and its vicinity. He also preached for Grimshaw and Ingham. He at last procured ordination from the Bishop of Lincoln, by the influence of the Methodist peer, Lord Dartmouth, and was presented to a curacy, the name of which, associated with the "Olney Hymns," has become familiar in most of the English world. He received this favour also from the patronage of Dartmouth, to whom he afterwards addressed several letters of his "Cardiphonia."

About the time of this appointment a young clergyman by the name of Unwin, who, while at Cambridge, had been the friend of Berridge, was introduced to the Countess of Huntingdon, and preached in her chapels at Tunbridge Wells and Bristol. In his father's house at Huntingdon, Cowper, the household poet of English Christianity, had found an asylum. At the death of the elder Unwin, Newton visited and consoled the family in their affliction, and at his instance the widow and Cowper removed to

* Jones's Christian Biography.

the parish of Olney. There the poet lived with all the reliefs that his mental malady could receive from the pious friendship of the Methodist curate, and the maternal care of the excellent lady, whom he compares to the mother that he had mourned in lines which few or none have read without tears. Cowper has been legitimately claimed as one of the Methodist Calvinistic Churchmen of that day.* He shared the interest of his pastor, Newton, in the Methodistic revival, and Newton introduced his poems to the public; he celebrated the revival in his earliest publication;† he defended its chief Calvinistic champion, Whitefield, in verse which will never die, and in an age when the current literature teemed with abuse of the great evangelist, and the drama had turned the laugh of the London theatre upon him;‡ he portrayed Wesley in words as truthful as eulogistic;§ his muse consecrated the example of Lord Dartmouth, the only nobleman who represented Methodism in the court—the one who wears a coronet and prays;‖ he contributed the best hymns in the "Olney Collection," replete with the Methodistic spirit of the times; he was the friend and admirer of Rowland Hill, and aided him in the preparation of his Hymns for children; he commemorated the charity of Thornton;¶ and has preserved for ever the name of Conyers, Lady Huntingdon's friend and correspondent, one of her most zealous co-labourers in Yorkshire, where he preached for Ingham's societies, and in the open air, and who, on being called upon to preach a visitation sermon before the Archbishop of York, was menaced with the threat of having his gown "stripped over his ears" if he should dare to preach his Methodism in the presence of his Grace.**

"The Task" has justly been celebrated as marking an era in English poetry, the transition from the poetry of the eighteenth to

Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. chap. 33.

† God gives the word; the preachers throng around;
Live from his lips, and spread the glorious sound;
That sound bespeaks salvation on her way,
The trumpet of a life-restoring day.—Hope 453—456.

‡ In the fine portrait of Leuconomus:
Leuconomus (beneath well-sounding Greek
I slur a name a poet must not speak), &c.—Hope, 554—593.

§ Beginning:
O I have seen (nor hope, perhaps in vain,
Ere life go down, to see such sights again)
A veteran warrior in the Christian field,
Who never saw the sword he could not wield.—Conversation, 605—624.

‖ Truth, 377—380.

¶ Charity, 244—253, and "Lines in Memory of Thornton."

** 'Tis open, and ye cannot enter. Why?
Because ye will not, Conyers would reply;

that of the nineteenth century—the substitution of natural for artificial language, and of familiar, popular themes for such as had been mostly appreciable only to cultivated minds; but it is more important, both historically and morally, as marking the era of the Methodistic resuscitation of religion in England. Both this work and Cowper's earlier large poems are imbued with the new religious sentiments of the times; they abound in Methodistic allusions, and contributed greatly to the restoration of evangelical piety throughout the range of the English language. Though he disguised the name of Whitefield, he did not disguise his principles. He was the first of English poets (not merely hymnists) who tuned the lyre to such sentiments. Milton's cathedral strains had rolled grandly down a hundred years, but they were Hebraic rather than evangelic; Herbert's pious conceits and churchly quaintnesses possessed a peculiar charm, but were become obsolete; Young commanded some respect for religion by his didactic platitudes, and prompted the grand religious genius of Klopstock on the Continent; but Cowper imbued his verse with the essential vitality as well as simplicity of the Gospel, and he was not more the poet of English household life than of English Methodism.

Newton had caught the spirit of Whitefield. "I bless God," he said, "that I have lived in his day." He used to go to hear him, as we have seen, before daylight, when Moorfields was as full of the lanterns of the thronging hearers as Haymarket of flambeaux on opera nights. He corresponded with Wesley. "I know of no one," he wrote to him from Grimshaw's head-quarters at Haworth, "to whom my heart is more united in affection, nor to whom I owe more as an instrument of divine grace." "I have had the honour," he adds, "to appear as a Methodist preacher." He apologized to Wesley for not devoting himself to the itinerant ministry; he had not, he said, strength of body or mind sufficient

And he says much that many may dispute.
And cavil at with ease, but none refute."—Truth, 357—360.

His Grace the Archbishop "cavilled" at Conyers "with ease," but did not refute him, nor stop him. After hearing the sermon referred to in the text, the prelate said to him, "Were you to inculcate the morality of Socrates it would do more good than canting about the new birth," and "walked off without waiting for a reply." Thornton, who was Conyers' brother-in-law, sat by his side at dinner that day, and, stealthily taking the sermon from his pocket, published it, and scattered it over the kingdom, and thus secured for us the only printed work which we have from the pen of this zealous Methodist Churchman.—(Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. i. chap. 17.) It is probable that Cowper's allusion was to this sermon, and the "disputes" and "cavils" it occasioned.

to be an itinerant, his constitution having been broken for several years.* But he adds, "I love the people called Methodists, and vindicate them from unjust aspersions upon all occasions, and suffer the reproach of the world for being one myself."†

John Thornton, the distinguished Methodist layman of London, presented him with the living of St. Mary Woolnoth, in the metropolis, where, for about twenty-seven years, he continued, by his writings and his co-operation with Lady Huntingdon, Romaine, Haweis, Hill, Burder, and their associates, to promote the Methodistic revival. He gave to the world a memoir of his friend Grimshaw. He may be considered one of the chief founders of the Low Church party, which was now, through the influence of Methodism,‡ rapidly rising in the Establishment, and of the great "Benevolent Enterprises" which, organized in the latter part of his life in London, embodied there the moral energies of England to be put forth in the ends of the earth.

Calvinistic Methodism had now such representatives in the pulpits of the Establishment and of the Dissenters, in nearly all parts of the country; they were the most popular of the clergy in London; they were multiplying in Ireland, and several chapels, directly or indirectly in connection with the Countess of Huntingdon, had sprung up in Dublin and other parts of the island. In Scotland it was represented by the chapels and chaplains of Lady Glenorchy, the "Lady Huntingdon of Scotland,"§ a convert of the devoted Jane Hill, an active co-labourer with the Countess, and a liberal benefactor of her college at Trevecca. The influence of the Countess, with that of Thornton and Lord Dartmouth, procured ordination and livings for many of the students of Trevecca. Many of them were also appointed to the pulpits of the Nonconformists,

* In his Cardiphonia, he says: "I wish there were more itinerant preachers." He, however, pronounces that mode of ministerial life suited only to men of peculiar qualifications—a good plan for men of "grace and zeal," and of "little fund or talent for a parochial field."

† Letter to Wesley, Arminian Magazine, 1780, page 441.

‡ Dr. Burkhard, who preached in London while Newton lived there, has given a chapter in his *Vollstandige Geschichte der Methodisten*—Complete History of Methodism (Anhang ii.) to this "remarkable man, who from a slave-trader became a Methodist preacher." Newton died in 1807, aged eighty-five. His works comprise six octavo volumes. "Few theologians of the last century contributed more to the advancement of experimental religion."—Jones's Christian Biography.

§ Lady Huntingdon Portrayed, chap. 6. New York, 1857.

and all of them preserved some effective though undefined relation to their patroness. The very vagueness of this relation doubtless enhanced that influence of Calvinistic Methodism among Churchmen and Dissenters, which we have considered as its providential work, and which would probably have been interrupted by any attempt at more restricted or more exact terms of co-operation. But its uncertainty must have occasioned frequent anxiety to the Calvinistic leaders, for events which might suddenly embarrass or arrest it were becoming imminent. The Countess was aged; her capacity for her great responsibilities might fail; her death was a daily contingency, and no definitive plan for the continuance of her system of evangelization had been provided, nor indeed could now be provided without hazardous disputes. Wesley's superior legislative genius had anticipated any similar peril to Arminian Methodism; but Calvinistic Methodism needed no such security for what we have ventured to pronounce its providential designation.

An entirely unexpected event precipitated its inevitable crisis. In a morally desolate part of the north of London stood an edifice, called the Pantheon, which had been devoted to Sunday amusements. The Countess obtained it in 1779, and opened it for public worship. Hitherto her societies had suffered little interference from the ecclesiastical laws, though they were unquestionably against such organizations within existing parishes. As her chapels were not designed to be Dissenting places of worship, they were supposed to be legally held as chaplaincies in her right as a peeress of the realm. The clergyman within whose parish the Pantheon was situated interfered, and claimed authority to control it, to preach in it if he pleased, and to use the moneys received from its sacraments and pews. An appeal was made to the law, and the legal authorities sustained him, though the statute on the question was virtually obsolete. Thornton and Lord Dartmouth counselled and sustained the Countess, but verdicts were given in the ecclesiastical courts by which Haweis and Glascott, two of her chaplains, were prohibited from officiating in the new chapel. The decision affected not only this case, but applied equally *to all her other places of worship*. There was but one practicable course for her—to take shelter under the Toleration Act, and turn them all into Dissenting chapels, a measure which must seriously affect her relations to the evangelical Churchmen who had hitherto co-operated with her. "I am reduced," wrote the afflicted Countess, who faithfully loved the Church, "I am reduced to turn the finest congregation, not only in England, but in any part of the world, into a Dissenting meeting-house!"

"I am to be cast out of the Church now, *only for what I have been doing these forty years—speaking and living for Jesus Christ.*"

The die was cast, and Calvinistic Methodism, as represented by "Lady Huntingdon's Connexion," was thrust out of the Church, and took its position among the Dissenters. Thus did the Establishment continue to drive from its ranks the evangelists who were restoring the power and redeeming the honour of Christianity in the land.

Some of her clerical preachers formally renounced the Church, particularly Wills and Taylor, who had first preached in the Pantheon. They addressed a solemn "Vindication to the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England," and turned their backs indignantly upon it. But most of the regular clergy, who had been the chief co-labourers of the Countess, adhered to it, and preached no more in her pulpits; and after their long and heroic common labours and sufferings, we read in the records of the times, with mingled surprise and sadness, with a sentiment of indignation, not at the men, but at the Church, that Romaine, Venn, Townsend, Jesse, and other veteran Methodists, found it expedient to "withdraw from the service of the Countess's Connexion," and drop the banners which they had borne so triumphantly, though "irregularly," over the land, and thenceforth confine themselves to their "regular" fields.

It is easy to conjecture what Wesley would have done in similar circumstances: attached as he was to the Church, and determined never voluntarily to leave it, we know that he was equally determined never to succumb to its prelatical interference with what he deemed his providentially appointed work; that when forbidden at Bristol to preach in that diocese, he answered the episcopal menace by taking his stand on Mount Hannam, within it, and proclaiming his message to the weeping thousands of Kingswood colliers, who crept, unwashed, from their mines to hear him; that in his first Conference, nearly forty years before this intolerant treatment of Lady Huntingdon, he had asked the question, "How far shall we obey the bishops?" and answered it as bravely as wisely, "In all things *indifferent*. And on this ground of obeying them we should observe the canons, as far as we can with a safe conscience;" that at the next session it was asked, "Is not the will of our governors a law?" and answered with befitting emphasis, "*No!*" not of any governor, temporal or spiritual; therefore, if any bishop will that I should not preach the Gospel, *his will is no law to me.*" "But what if he produce a law against your preaching?" "I am to obey

God rather than man!" "Church or no Church," he wrote to his brother, Charles Wesley, "we must save souls;" and "we believe," he declared in his Minutes, that the Methodists will either "be thrust out, or leaven the whole Church." He stood always calmly ready for either alternative. Treated as the Countess of Huntingdon had been by the Consistorial Court of the Bishop of London, Wesley would doubtless have adopted the course which she pursued; but he was too formidable, with his thorough organization, his hundreds of preachers, and thousands of members, for such interference. It would not be expedient to swell the ranks of Dissent by such hosts; the very foundations and buttresses of the Establishment might be shaken by the rash measure, and the mighty man was allowed to proceed, mobbed, satirized, and treated by the ecclesiastical dignitaries with proud but impotent disdain.

Rowland Hill, who had never been fully reconciled to the Countess since her alienation from him, now maintained an ambiguous relation to both her Connexion and the Church, and became virtually the head of a species of Methodistic "connexion" of his own. Some of her societies became "Independent;" the celebrated William Jay, whose writings, rich in evangelical sentiment and in talent, are precious in our religious literature, was settled over one of them, the noted Argyle Chapel, Bath.* He had been a pupil of Cornelius Winter, the companion of Whitefield in his last American voyage. Winter sent him out from his school to preach in neighbouring villages before he was sixteen years of age, and he became an "open air" evangelist, addressing rustic assemblies, not only in their cottages, but "on the green turf before the door, or on the road, or in a field hard by."† Lady Maxwell, an influential Arminian Methodist, and correspondent of Wesley, engaged him to officiate in her chapel at Hotwells, where he laboured under her patronage for nearly a year. Tuppen, a preacher in Whitefield's Connexion, and afterwards minister of the "Tabernacle" at Portsea, first took charge of the Argyle Chapel, and "with his dying breath" recommended Jay to his people, and Winter delivered the "charge" at his installation. Though the Methodistic relations of Jay became thus modified, they were always cordial; and few men, not recognized as the leaders of the Methodistic revival, have done more to promote it than he, by his catholic spirit, frequent writings, and prolonged and saintly life. He co-operated with the Huntingdon

* Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. chap. 30.

† Jay's account of himself in his "Jubilee Address," 1841.

Methodists to the last, and lived to preach at the re-opening of the celebrated Tottenham Court Road Chapel in 1831.*

Another step was soon necessary on the part of the Countess. Legally recognized now as Dissenters, her preachers could no longer obtain ordination from the bishops. In 1783 they were, for the first time, ordained by their own brethren in her Spafields Chapel, and thus was the breach between her and her former clerical associates impassably widened. They cordially sympathized with her evangelical labours; but the chief of them publicly stood aloof. The veterans among them, who had been her earliest and best dependence, were sinking under the infirmities of age, and, if they had been at liberty to co-operate with her, were rapidly becoming disabled for active service. She too was hastening with them to the grave; and in 1791, burdened with eighty-four years, she closed the most remarkable career which is recorded of her sex, in the modern Church, by a death which was crowned with the serenity and hope that befitted a life so devout and beneficent. Through a lingering and painful illness she gave utterance to sentiments, not merely of resignation, but of rapture. When a blood-vessel broke, the presage of her departure, she said to Lady Anne Erskine: "I am well; all is well—well for ever. I see, wherever I turn my eyes, whether I live or die, nothing but victory." "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Oh, Lady Anne, the coming of the Lord draweth nigh! The thought fills my soul with joy unspeakable." At other times she exclaimed, "My soul is filled with glory; I am as in the element of heaven itself." "I am encircled in the arms of love and mercy; I long to be at home; Oh, I long to be at home!" A little before she died she said repeatedly: "I shall go to my Father this night;" and shortly after: "Can he forget to be gracious? Is there any end of his loving-kindness?" Almost her last words were: "*My work is done; I have nothing to do but to go to my Father.*"†

* This famous chapel is at present one of the most interesting religious monuments in London; its length, one hundred and twenty-seven feet; breadth, seventy; height of its dome, one hundred and fourteen. Its pulpit is the one in which Whitefield preached. It can seat from three to four thousand hearers; its walls are ornamented with tablets to the memory of Whitefield, Captain Joss, Toplady, &c. In its mausoleum are the remains of several preachers, Dissenters and Churchmen. The visitor cannot but regret the absence of Whitefield's bones; it is their appropriate resting-place, and the next centenary of Methodism should not be allowed to pass without their generous surrender by America to England.

† Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. chap. 54.

Her character has received the best possible delineation by the record of her works in the preceding pages.* She was profoundly devout, as her life and death attested. The German historian of Methodism, who personally knew her, says that, "conversing with her, you forgot the earldom in her exhibition of humble, loving piety."† She was somewhat pertinacious of her opinions: financially she was liberal to excess, as shown by her benefactions, amounting to one hundred thousand pounds, and by the embarrassments which she often suffered from her contributions to the poor. The power with which she swayed so many able men through so many years, is the more remarkable for not having been the result of any official or ecclesiastical prerogative. She resembled Wesley in the tenacity and steadiness with which she prosecuted her long and great work; and perhaps her sex alone deprived her of equal success and eminence.

The interval between her involuntary secession from the national Church and her death, was filled with undiminished labours and scarcely diminished success; and to the last her cause seemed to need only a better organic system to perpetuate its energy. She saw this necessity, and in the year preceding her death called together a council of her chief friends, to form an "Association for uniting and perpetuating the Connexion." A circular was issued to all her societies, presenting a form of organization. Its provisions were minute and judicious; the whole Connexion was divided into twenty-three districts; annual and quarterly meetings were to be held; connexional funds to be collected; and especially was it provided, that as "the Lord had in the present age much blessed itinerant preaching, circuits should be formed, in different parts of the kingdom, for the further spread of the Gospel of Christ, and that preachers should be sent out and supported by the Connexion, as collectively considered, so far as the Lord should enable and their finances allow!" It was apparently copied from Wesley's model; but it was too late: governments cannot be suddenly superinduced; they must grow. Questionings, oppositions, menaces of revolt by important societies and men, came back to her in reply to the circular. The aged Countess entreated their co-operation in an affecting letter: "I am now," she wrote, "in the eighty-fourth year of my age, and much bodily pain fills the greatest part of my declining and evil days; but you remain, as ever, near and dear to my heart, and will do till my last breath ceases to make me an inhabitant of

* See particularly book ii. chap. 4.

† Vollstandige Geschichte der Methodisten, &c., vol. ii. app. 1.

the earth. I have also, with many an aching heart, felt the vast importance to the comfort of you all, how the most faithfully to preserve the pure and blessed Gospel of Jesus Christ among you when I am gone. A variety of ways my many hours of sorrowful prayers and tears have suggested, and the settlement of my best meanings has many times been put in execution. But, alas! where my best confidence has from time to time been placed, the Lord has confounded it."*

The scheme failed, and she died, leaving her great work to the care of her devisees, and particularly to the superintendence of Lady Anne Erskine, daughter of Lord Buchan, one of her old and most capable female coadjutors. The lease of Trevecca College having expired, the institution was transferred the next year after the Countess's death to Cheshunt, about twelve miles from London, where it has continued, with more or less reputation, to our day. The disintegration of Calvinistic Methodism could not but proceed, in the absence of any confederative system. In Wales it became isolated, but powerful by its thorough local organization, and the "result is that, by the blessing of God, the great majority of the religious population of Wales now belong to that denomination." The Whitefield Methodists in England have mostly been absorbed by Congregationalism. Lady Huntingdon's chapels remain, and bear her name, but rank generally with the same class of Christians. They are no longer known by the epithet of Methodist. The rapid growth of the Wesleyan Methodists in numbers and public importance, has gradually led the popular mind to appropriate the title exclusively to them, except in the Principality.

An able writer, himself a member of "Lady Huntingdon's Con-

* Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii. chap 54. Whitefield also regretted his neglect of a better organization of his people. Dr. Adam Clarke says: "Mr. Pool was well known to Mr. Whitefield; and, having met him one day, he accosted him in the following manner: 'Well, John, art thou still a Wesleyan?' 'Yes, sir; and I thank God that I have the privilege of being in connection with Mr. Wesley and one of his preachers.' 'John, thou art in thy right place. My brother Wesley acted wisely. The souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in class, and thus preserved the fruits of his labour. This I neglected; and my people are a rope of sand.' And what now remains of this great man's labour? Scarcely any thing. Multitudes were converted under his ministry, and are gone to God, but there is no spiritual succession. The Tabernacle near Moorfields, the Tabernacle in Tottenham Court Road, and one in Bristol, with what is called the Little School in Kingswood, are all even of his places of worship that remain; and these are mere Independent chapels."—(Clarke's Miscellaneous Works.) The class-meeting has been the nucleus of Methodism throughout the world.

nexion," has attempted to account for the decline of Calvinistic Methodism in England.* He ascribes it, in part, to its Calvinistic theology, but more particularly to the localization of the labours of its respective Churches, by their control in the persons of trustees rather than in a connexional body, and the consequent decline of "the spirit of zealous itinerancy." The comprehensive reason was, doubtless, the lack of an early systematic government, which could grow with its growth, and conserve it against the influence of those accidents which at last determined its fate. But this want we have deemed a providential fact in its history; it accomplished its appointed task, an inestimable work, and if its visible remains as a religious party are not what its adherents may have hoped, its remaining influence on British Christianity is profound, and will be, probably, to the end of time. It revived, as has been shown, the Calvinistic Nonconformity of England; and, in co-operation with the more powerful sway of Arminian Methodism, produced that evangelical or Low Church party which has been the chief redemption of the national Church in later times.

In the next generation many of the descendants of the leading Methodists, lay and clerical, became conspicuous in the evangelical and philanthropic enterprises which have given England her chief modern glory among Christian nations. Allied mostly with the national Church, and hopeful of its speedy renovation by the new impulses which Methodism had given it, their loyalty to it took an intensity which their fathers might have accused of bigotry, but which could not repel the few veterans who still lingered after the sore combats of the preceding century. The benevolent Thornton, whom Cowper's verse and letters have rendered familiar to the literary world, as his own Methodism has to the religious world, had been active and liberal to the end, in his patronage of the great revival. His son, Henry Thornton, inherited his piety and benevolence as well as his wealth. A man of commanding influence, as much from his character as from his opulence, Henry Thornton possessed also an unusual intellect; "a brow capacious and serene, a scrutinizing eye, and lips slightly separated, as one who listens and prepares to speak, were the true interpreters of the informing mind within him."† No interest of his race appealed to him in vain;

* Introduction, by Rev. J. K. Foster, to the Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. ii.

† See the elegant article on "The Clapham Sect," Edinburgh Review, 1844; by Sir James Stephen, author of Lectures on the History of France. Stephen himself was the "youth who not seldom listened, while he seemed to read the book spread out before him," in the circle at Clapham.

his money, influence, and intelligence were consecrated to humanity, and always with most devotion where public indifference or prejudice most neglected it.

In the beautiful village of Clapham, near London, the great Pitt had erected an elegant villa as a refuge from the cares of state and the storms of politics. It was "lofty and symmetrical, curiously wainscoted with books on every side, except where it opened on a far extended lawn, and reposed beneath the giant arms of aged elms and massive tulip-trees." It became the home of Henry Thornton, and there, at the close of the day, the Christian banker and philanthropist found peaceful retirement amid the serene beauties of nature, and was refreshed by the recreations of his children, and a beloved "matronly presence which controlled, animated, and harmonized the elements of this little world by a kindly spell, of which none could trace the workings, though the charm was confessed by all." Hither also resorted the good great men of his day, to seek counsel from his practical wisdom; to devise liberal things for the state, the Church, and for all the world; to relax from the cares of public life in untrammelled conversation, not too grave if not too hilarious; to share the sumptuous family hospitalities and join in the family devotions, for there were "his porch, his study, his judgment-seat, his oratory, and 'the church that was in his house'—the reduced, but not imperfect resemblance of that innumerable company which his catholic spirit embraced and loved, under all the varying forms which conceal their union from each other, and from the world. Discord never agitated that tranquil home; lassitude never brooded over it. Those demons quailed at the aspect of a man in whose heart peace had found a resting-place, though his intellect was incapable of repose." Thornton's home at Clapham was as much resorted to as Coleridge's at Highgate. Travellers from all parts of the world, especially such as could report the prospects of Christianity and knowledge; philanthropists, wise or Quixotic; men of inventive genius, political reformers, the preachers of Methodism or of the Church, went thither as on pilgrimage; and among them were often found the unfortunate, the poor, and such as had no friend, for the princely layman appropriated during several years nearly six-sevenths of his revenues to alms, and in a single year gave to the poor nearly ten thousand pounds. More than thirty years he was a member of Parliament, and always represented progressive sentiments, qualified by conservative good sense. He advocated "the great Whig doctrines" of Peace, Reform, Economy, Toleration, and African Emancipation. William Wilberforce wandered

gleefully with the children among the beauties of the garden, or sat in the social counsels of the study, planning for religion and liberty throughout the realm and throughout the earth. Granville Sharp, the first chairman of the Bible Society, was by his side; or between them a returned Wesleyan missionary, with news from the plantations of the West Indies. Zachary Macaulay was a commanding figure in the group; and there were also Stephen, the brother-in-law of Wilberforce, and a leader of the growing evangelical party; Grant, who represented in the social discussions the religious claims of India, as he did in the Court of the East India Company's directors; Henry Martyn, destined to die sublimely as a missionary in the East, and to live for ever in the admiring remembrance of the Christian world. Lord Teignmouth, a relative of the Hills, and the first president of the Bible Society, was an ever welcome guest in the circle. The venerable Simeon, of Cambridge, was often there to give them his blessing.* Rowland Hill and Sir Richard, with their hearty and not undevout pleasantries, and Isaac Milner, the noted Dean of Carlisle, frequented the social sanctuary: John Venn, the projector of the "Church Missionary Society," and son of Venn, the Methodist Churchman, was "looked up to as its pastor and guide;" and his aged father himself died in Christian triumph among them, a veteran evangelist of more than threescore and ten years.† "Bell and Lancaster were both there—welcome guests; schools, prison discipline, savings' banks, tracts, village libraries, district visitings, and church buildings, each for a time rivalled their cosmopolitan projects." The great political questions of the day were discussed among them, and always from a Christian point of view, and never with a conclusion which they were not ready to refer to the bar of God. "Every human interest had its guardian, every region of the globe its representative." They went from their social and Christian council-chamber in Clapham, to the

* Simeon's relations to the Calvinistic Methodist Churchmen were of great importance in the development of the "Low Church Party."—(See Carus's Life of Simeon.) Wesley met him repeatedly, and loved him. "He has spent," says Wesley, (Journal, Dec. 20, 1784,) "some time with Mr. Fletcher at Madeley; two kindred souls much resembling each other, both in fervour of spirit and in the earnestness of their address."

† Cowper, who restricted his associations with the clergy almost exclusively to such as were Methodistic, wrote to Newton respecting the elder Venn: "I have seen few men whom I could love more. Were I capable of envying, in the strict sense of the word, a good man, I should envy him and Mr. Berridge and yourself, who have spent, and while they last will continue to spend, your lives in the service of the only Master worth serving."—Life of Henry Venn, by John Venn, Rector of Clapham.

political assembly in London, or to Parliament, and there found godless but patriotic statesmen ready, from motives of humanity or of ambition, to fight their measures through; but they depended for success not on these so much as upon the Divine blessing, and the influence of their appeal to the moral sense of the nation. Nearly all the great political reforms which, from that day down to this, have ameliorated England, were canvassed and prayed over at Clapham. They have been brought to pass, not so much by the ambitious eloquence and energy of Parliamentary politicians, as by the resuscitated moral sense of the nation, resuscitated by Methodism and appealed to by these representatives and fruits of the Methodist revival; for "they were," says their not too partial historian, "the sons, by natural or spiritual birth, of men who, in the earlier days of Methodism, had shaken off the lethargy in which, till then, the Church of England had been entranced—of men by whose agency the great evangelical doctrine of faith, emerging in its primeval splendour, had not only overpowered the contrary heresies, but had perhaps obscured some kindred truths."

The elder Venn had, as we have seen, been curate of Clapham, and there became acquainted with the elder Thornton, and at his opulent home first saw Lady Huntingdon, and first heard Whitefield, for it was a favourite preaching-place of the latter. The great preacher "expounded" there to overflowing assemblies, and was, in co-operation with Thornton and the Countess, the real founder of the famous "Clapham sect." "At both ends of the town, he wrote, in his characteristic style, "the word runs and is glorified. The champions in the Church go on like sons of thunder. I am to be at Clapham this evening; Mr. Venn will gladly embrace the first opportunity. May it be a Bethel!"*

The Methodist Englishman may, with proper modesty, refrain from claiming the great reforms of English politics, and of even the British constitution, which have occurred since the days of his religious fathers, as due to their Christian labours; the unevangelical Churchman would smile at the claim; but the future impartial and philosophic historian will record that those splendid ameliorations could not have taken place without the popular improvements introduced by Methodism; that the Methodistic influence, as experienced by "the good men of Clapham," gave them their effective power; that the reformed moral sense of the nation, responding to the Christian appeals of these good and great men, secured the triumph and permanence of their political reforms, and that when the Church

* Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon, vol. i. chap. 13.

itself was impotent, Methodism effectively acted through it, and through Dissent, to reclaim if not to save the nation.

Whatever may be said of such a claim, it will be conceded that the great "moral enterprises" of that and subsequent times in England owe their beginnings chiefly to the influence of Methodism. The Bible, the Tract, and the Missionary Societies, Negro Emancipation, and the general incorporation of the Sunday School into the Church, Dissenting and Established, were, as we have seen, the traceable results of that influence. Most of these interests were discussed and promoted at Clapham. "Bibles," says one who mingled in its circle as a quiet but observant youth, "Bibles, schools, missionaries, the circulation of evangelical books, and the training of evangelical clergymen, the possession of well-attended pulpits, war through the press, and war in Parliament, against every form of injustice which either law or custom sanctioned—such were the forces by which they hoped to extend the kingdom of light, and to resist the tyranny with which the earth was threatened." They established the "Christian Observer" as their organ, under the editorship of Zachary Macaulay; and subsequently arose, for their public assemblies, "Exeter Hall," with its occasional whimsicalities, but its substantial blessings to England and the world.

Such were some of the grand results of the combined influence of Calvinistic and Arminian Methodism on the Church and the Dissent of the times; such some of the proofs of the assertion, heretofore cited from a living Churchman, that from the Methodistic revival "the religious epoch now current must date its commencement," and to it "must be traced what is most characteristic of the present time."* While, however, Calvinistic Methodism, from the social position of some of its leaders, enlisted many from the higher classes in these great undertakings, we must seek in the more extended and more vigorous sway of Arminian Methodism, for that popular influence which rallied the masses to them. We take then our final leave of Calvinistic Methodism, not regretting it as a failure, but rejoicing over it as a mighty auxiliary to its Arminian and more permanent associate—a symmetrical historical fact, having already fulfilled a complete and sublime mission, in the order of divine Providence, whatever may be its future career.†

* Isaac Taylor's Wesley and Methodism, Preface.

† The "good men of Clapham" were stricter Churchmen than their Methodist predecessors, and most of their own descendants have forgotten their Methodistic antecedents in a still stricter churchmanship; but history can never ignore the Methodistic honour of their fathers, and of their own reli-

gious education. The "Christian Observer" very early began to look askance at Methodism; the younger Venn, as we have seen, endeavoured to palliate his father's heroic example of "irregularity;" and Dr. Shirley, for some time a laborious secretary of the Bible Society, and afterward Bishop of Sodor and Man, presented a mortifying contrast to the conduct of his Methodist grandfather (in his letter to the Bishop of Clonfert, see p. 377), by apologizing to the Bishop of Lichfield for having attended a meeting in behalf of the Moravian Missions. "I am quite prepared," he wrote, "not to attend them again if your lordship thinks it even inexpedient that I should do so." —(Letters and Memoirs, by Archdeacon Hill. London, 1849.) The history of Christianity demonstrates the utter hopelessness of any permanent evangelical life in Churches open to the pride and power of "Establishments." Wesley's alleged unfaithfulness to the Church saved Methodism. Robert Hall early expressed his regret at the growing fastidiousness of the evangelical party in the Church. "We feel, with regard to the greater part of those who succeed them, a confidence that they will continue to tread in their steps. But we cannot dissemble our concern at perceiving a set of men rising up among them, ambitious of new-modelling the party, who, if they have too much virtue openly to renounce their principles, yet have too little firmness to endure the consequences; timid, temporizing spirits, who would refine into insipidity; and under we know not what pretences of regularity, moderation, and a care not to offend, rob it utterly of that energy of character to which it owes its success. If they learn from this and other writers of a similar description to insult their brethren, fawn upon their enemies, and abuse their defenders, they will soon be frittered to pieces; they will become 'like other men,' feeble, enervated, and shorn of their strength."—Hall's Works, vol. iv. pp. 122, 123.

CHAPTER IV.

WESLEY AND HIS PREACHERS, FROM 1770 TO 1780.

Wesley in Old Age—Scenes of Itinerancy—Wesley's Pastoral Visits—His Ministrations to Prisoners—Execution of Dr. Dodd—Wesley's Literary Labours—His "Calm Address to the American Colonies," and his Views of the American Revolution—Continued Persecution of his Preachers—The Trials of William Darney at Almondbury—Persecution at Seacroft—William England—Matthew Mayer's Conflicts at Oldham—John Oliver and his Trials—Alexander Mather among Mobs—Richard Rodda—His extraordinary Escape in a Mine—His Ministerial Hardships—Poverty of Methodist Preachers—John Pritchard—Death of John Downes—Death of John Nelson—His Funeral—His Character—Silas Told and his Good Works among Malefactors—Illustrations of the Times—Execution of an Innocent Woman—A Man hung for a Sixpence.

We have traced the labours of Wesley and his Arminian associates down to the Conference of 1770. The Calvinistic controversy prevailed during most of the interval from that date to the Conference of 1780, but the Wesleyan itinerants were not diverted by it from their more appropriate work. It was a period of greatly increased labours and rapid advancement to their cause in all parts of the United Kingdom, and they were surprised by frequent reports of its success in America, notwithstanding the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. From Nova Scotia to Antigua in the West Indies, Methodism had unfurled its evangelic standard amid the tumults of the times.

Wesley himself paused not to waste his strength in the Calvinistic combat. A few brief pamphlets, scarcely occupying a hundred pages in his collected works, with an occasional popular tract on the general question, were thrown off from his pen as he traversed the land, preaching twice or thrice daily, counselling his "helpers" in Conferences, editing both religious and scientific publications for his people, adjusting local difficulties in his societies, and conducting, in fine, an ecclesiastical scheme which transcended in labours, if not in responsibilities, the combined functions of all the prelates of the land. Though he reached, early in this period, the allotted age of man, his Journals show more extensive travels, and labours

of the pen and the pulpit, than in the first decade of his Methodistic career. The gray hairs of threescore and ten years were his only sign of declining life. His brow was smooth, his eye clear and brilliant as in youth—"the brightest and most piercing that can be conceived" *—his complexion ruddy, his voice strong, and an addition of years nearly equal to what was then a generation remained for him. Good, great, marvellous old man! history would not be faithful to herself if she could contemplate him at this period of his career without emotion. He had become the best-known man in England, the father of his people, and the wonder of his enemies; and his ministerial host, many of them veteran heroes, like Nelson, Haime, Taylor, and Mather, beheld him with enthusiastic admiration, and bowed to his orders as troops in the field, assured that whatever forlorn hope they were to lead would find him at hand, and could know no defeat. On his seventy-first birth-day he writes:† "How is this, that I find just the same strength as I did thirty years ago?" His sight was considerably better now, and his nerves firmer than they were then. He had none of the infirmities of old age, and had lost several that he had in his youth. The grand *cause*, he says, is, "the good pleasure of God, who doeth whatsoever pleaseth him." The chief *means* were, 1. His constantly rising at four o'clock, for about fifty years; 2. His generally preaching at five in the morning, "one of the most healthy exercises in the world;" 3. His never travelling less, by sea or land, than four thousand five hundred miles in a year.

And this unintermitted travelling, at the rate of more than the circumference of the globe every six years, was performed mostly on horseback down to his sixty-ninth year, when his friends provided for him a carriage. He paid more tolls, says Robert Southey, than any other Englishman. His riding and exposures brought upon him occasional attacks of sickness, but he recovered from them so promptly that he was sometimes disposed to consider his restoration miraculous. While in Ireland, during our present period, he was prostrated by the severest sickness of his life, brought upon him by sleeping at noon on the grass in an orchard, a siesta in which he had indulged for forty years. His tongue was "black as a coal;" he could not turn himself in his bed; his memory failed,

* Wesleyan Methodism in the Congleton Circuit, by Rev. J. B. Dyson, p. 107. London: 1856.

† Wesley's Journal, June 28, 1774. Works, vol. iv. My farther citations from Wesley, in this chapter, are from this volume, except when otherwise indicated.

and he could give no account of what followed for two or three days. An emetic roused the energy of his constitution; in a few days he was up, and in less than a week was on his way to Dublin. His chief perils were from the stumbling of his horses. He records not a few hair-breadth escapes from them. One of them occasioned an injury which produced a hydrocele, in his seventieth year. A surgical operation, he was informed, would require him to lie on his back fifteen or sixteen days. How could his work stand still during this long interval; and might not the posture and confinement affect his constitution? he inquires. No danger was apprehended by his physician from the malady, and he resolved not to sacrifice his labours for its removal. But it grew worse, and he at last submitted to the operation; half a pint of water was taken from him, and with it appeared a pearl of the size of a small shot.* The next day he writes that he is as perfectly easy as if no operation had been performed, and his work goes on as usual. When seventy-three years old he writes that he is far abler to preach than he was at three-and-twenty. What natural means has God used to produce so wonderful an effect, he asks? The same causes as before are enumerated, but with more particularity: 1. Continual exercise and change of air, by travelling above four thousand miles in a year; 2. Constant rising at four; 3. The ability to sleep immediately, when he needed it; 4. The never losing a night's sleep in his life; 5. Two violent fevers, and two "deep consumptions; these, it is true," he adds, "were rough medicines; but they were of admirable service, causing my flesh to come again, as the flesh of a little child." Lastly he mentions, evenness of temper. "I *feel* and *grieve;* but, by the grace of God, I *fret* at nothing. But still 'the help that is done upon earth, He doeth it himself.' And this he doeth in answer to many prayers."—(Journal, June 28, 1776.)

It would require volumes to detail his travels during the present period. In Ireland he not only visits the chief centres of the Methodistic fields, but penetrates the obscure villages and mountain regions, preaching in the market-places, the streets, and on the hill-sides. He reaches the sequestered region of Glenarm, and records the evangelistic adventures of Smith, the northern pioneer.† He preaches in peace among the scenes of the persecutions at Clones and Ennis-

* Southey remarks, (Life of Wesley, chap. 30, *note:*) "What an extraordinary relic would this pearl have been had it been extracted from a Romish saint! I know not whether there be any other case on record of a physical *oystracism.*

† See Book iii., chap. 3.

killen, and writes the story of the trials of John M'Burney, the Irish protomartyr of Methodism (Journal, May, 1773). Dublin and Cork receive him with the honours due to a patriarch.

We follow him rapidly through the mountain defiles, the towns and villages, of Wales; and, years after the death of Howell Harris, he exclaims, amid the memories of his old friend, "What a lovely place, and what a lovely family! still consisting of about six score persons. So the good 'man is turned again to his dust,' but his thoughts do not perish."

He visited Scotland repeatedly during this period, and was better received than ever he had been in the north; the gentry, as well as the common people, flocking to hear him—"all sorts—Seceders, Glassites, Nonjurors, and what not." The magistrates of Perth presented him, in good Latin, the freedom of their city, and the privileges of a burgess, *in debiti amoris et affectuum tesseram erga Johannem Wesley*—"in token of their deserved love and affection." The good citizens of Arbroath honoured him in like manner. The Calvinistic "Circular" was abroad, however, and in some places he and his associates were "believed to be dreadful heretics, to whom no countenance should be given." He could trust that to the future, and passed on without debate, preaching daily. He was admitted to some of the kirks, and often, at his five o'clock morning sermon, the assemblies were crowded. But the grave, metaphysical Scotch were still problems to him; their cool impassiveness provoked him to judge them severely; they appeared to him "so wise that they needed no more knowledge; so good that they needed no more religion." They were "too brimful of wisdom and goodness" to be "warned to flee from the wrath to come." He gave them credit, however, for candour and patience under plain-dealing from the pulpit. He knew no men equal to them in this respect. He sometimes justly suspected that their apparent impassivity was owing to his want of a knowledge of the right way of addressing them. Whitefield could overwhelm them with his emotions, and Wesley, after a sermon in Glasgow, acknowledged that the Scots, if touched on the right key, received as lively impressions as the English. Whitefield, however, was a good Calvinist; that was essential to his apostleship with the Scotch. They respected and wondered at Wesley, as unaccountably zealous and devoted for a heretic; he was as much a problem to them as they were to him.

In England he appeared almost ubiquitous during this period. His gray hairs, his steadfast energy, his long endurance of persecution, the triumphs of Methodism among the lowest classes—the

colliers of Kingswood, Newcastle, and Wednesbury, over mobs which sometimes had almost resembled the tumults of civil war—had given him a prestige and a character for heroism which could not fail to command the popular admiration. The young were interested to hear him, by the tales of his early struggles, related by their fathers; the old gathered in his vast assemblies with the sobered, if not saddened, reminiscences of the youthful days in which they first heard him. At South Lye, near Oxford, one man was in his audience, and one only, who had heard there his first sermon, nearly half a century before; "most of the rest had gone to their long home." He hastens often to Cornwall, for it has become the Eden of Methodism. Its rude but devout miners turn out in armies to hail him, and in the streets of Redruth he now appropriately proclaims as his text, "Happy are the people that have the Lord for their God." "I went on," he adds, "to our old friends at St. Ives, *many of whom are now grayheaded as well as I.*" A jutting cliff, with the wide expanse of the tranquil ocean in the distance, was his favourite pulpit among them. To accommodate those who could not come up to the hill, he preached again in a street; "well nigh all the town were present," and thousands from all parts of the country. At Gwennap he preached in "the calm, still evening," in its magnificent natural amphitheatre, the people covering a circle of nearly fourscore yards diameter. At his next visit the "huge congregation" was larger, it was supposed, by fifteen hundred or two thousand than ever it had been. And at another visit he writes, the people both filled it and covered the ground round about to a considerable distance; so that, supposing the space to be fourscore yards square, and to contain five persons in a square yard, there must have been above two-and-thirty thousand people present, the largest assembly he had ever addressed. Yet he found, on inquiry, that all could hear, even to the skirts of the congregation—"perhaps the first time that a man of seventy had been heard by thirty thousand persons at once!"

As he rode through the Dales, in the north, admiring the "green gently rising meadows and fields on both sides of the crystal river, sprinkled over with innumerable little houses," he could record "that three in four, if not nine in ten," of these comfortable homes had "sprung up since the Methodists came hither." Since that time "the beasts were turned into men, and the wilderness into a fruitful field;" and "this blessed people still devoured every word." In London he was now admitted, not only to St. Bartholomew's, but also to Allhallows' church, where, in 1735, he had preached for

the first time without notes. But not content with these opportunities, and the accommodations of his own chapels, he went often to Moorfields, the scene of his old metropolitan triumphs, and of those of his fellow-labourer, Whitefield; and now, in his old age, he preached to the largest congregation that ever assembled there; yet he assures us that the most distant listeners could hear perfectly well. "So," he writes, "the season for field-preaching is not yet over; it cannot be while so many are in their sins and in their blood." At another time he says: "It being a warm, sun-shiny day, I preached in Moorfields in the evening; there were thousands upon thousands, and all were still as night. Not only violence and rioting, but even scoffing at field-preachers, are now over."

At Shoreham, where his old friend Perronet still lingered, he records, after preaching, that "no society in the county grows so fast as this, either in grace or number." And "the chief instrument of this glorious work" was a daughter of the venerable vicar, "a burning and a shining light," as were so many of her family during the Methodistic revival. He passes from town to town, frequently preaching in circumstances of similar encouragement. At Chowbent, which had been "the roughest place in all the neighbourhood," he found not "the least trace" of its old barbarism remaining; "such is the fruit of the genuine Gospel." The vicar opened the church for him in the evening, and it was crowded in such a manner as it had not been for a hundred years. Immense multitudes still gathered to hear him on John Nelson's hill, at Birstal—the largest congregation that was ever seen there, twelve or fourteen thousand —and still greater hosts at Leeds. At Haworth, Grimshaw's parish, the multitude crowded within and around the church; and at Padiham, where he addressed a "huge congregation" in the street, he writes, "What has God wrought since Mr. Grimshaw and I were seized near this place by a furious mob, and kept prisoners for some hours! The sons of him who headed that mob now gladly receive our saying." At Colne, the scene of one of his old and fiercest conflicts, the congregation was twice as large as at Haworth, and now the respectful thousands heard with "deep attention on every face," while he discoursed of "the great white throne coming down from heaven." Three days later he writes, "I scarce ever saw a congregation wherein men, women, and children stood in such a posture: and this in the town where thirty years ago no Methodist could show his head! The first who preached here was John Jane, who was innocently riding through the town, when the zealous mob pulled him off his horse, and put him in the stocks. He seized the

opportunity, and vehemently exhorted them to 'flee from the wrath to come.'" We have already seen John Jane, seen him die as heroically as he here preached, leaving not enough effects, with "his clothes, hat, and wig," to pay his funeral expenses, but "departing with a smile on his face," counting himself rich, and exclaiming, "I find the love of God in Christ Jesus."* Wesley was now continually reminded of such incidents of his early ministry.

With a mixture of sadness and gladness he took leave, in the latter part of the present decade, of his old fortress, the Foundry, the first opened of his chapels, the scene of his first Conference, and from the adjacent parsonage of which his mother had ascended to heaven. In his Journal of August 8, 1779, he says: "This was the last night which I spent at the Foundry. What hath God wrought there in one-and-forty years?" The name and site of the edifice are renowned in the history of Methodism. It stood on Windmill Hill, Upper Moorfields, in what is now known as Windmill-street, covering about a hundred and twenty-five by a hundred feet of ground, and comprising a chapel, preacher's house or parsonage, school, band-room, and other accommodations. There was a belfry on one of the gable-ends, the bell of which called the worshippers together oftener perhaps than any other in the metropolis; during forty years it had summoned them daily at five o'clock in the morning, besides many other stated times during the week. The chapel boasted no pews, but had ten or twelve seats, with back rails, in front of the pulpit. There were free seats for females under the front gallery, and under the side galleries were free sittings for males. The side galleries were appropriated exclusively to males, and the front gallery to females. The band-room was in the rear of the chapel, and could receive three hundred worshippers; it was the place of the five o'clock morning sermon in winter, of the band-meetings on Thursday nights after the evening sermon, and of the two o'clock prayer-meetings on Wednesdays and Fridays. The north end of this apartment was furnished with desks for the school, the scene of faithful Silas Told's labours; and the south end with accommodations for the sale of Wesley's publications—the first of those "Book Concerns" which have since ranked among the chief publishing houses of the religious world. Over the band-room were Wesley's apartments, including his study. One room was used as a dispensary, where medicines were gratuitously given to the poor; he records six or seven hundred applicants in four months. The

* Book iv., chap. 1.

parsonage, occupied by assistant preachers and domestics, was at the extremity of the chapel, next to the gable with the belfry, and was entered through the chapel; and near at hand were a coach-house and stable.*

No trace of the venerable structure now remains; but its every detail is sacred to Methodists throughout the world, and engravings of it and its vicinity are everywhere familiar to them.

Prior to the Conference of 1776, at a meeting called for the purpose of providing a suitable chapel in place of the Foundry, above a thousand pounds were subscribed. A circular was sent by Wesley through the Connection, calling upon all his members to assist in raising the sum of £6000, which it was calculated the new building would cost. The yearly collection was suspended in order that the societies generally might aid the movement, and on the 21st day of April, 1777, he laid the corner-stone of the now famous City Road Chapel. On the first of November of the following year, he conducted the opening services before an immense assembly, preaching in the morning from part of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, and in the afternoon on the one hundred and forty-four thousand standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, and "God," he says, "was eminently present in the midst of the congregation." It was superior to any example of chapel architecture then possessed by the Dissenters in the metropolis, and is still considered a beautiful, though a chastely simple structure. Its walls bear tablets to the memory of both the Wesleys, Fletcher, Coke, Benson, and other eminent Methodists, preachers and laymen. Its adjacent accommodations for bands, classes, and the parsonage, are superior to those of the Foundry. In its burial-ground sleep Wesley and many of his old associates in labour and suffering.

Next to this, his London head-quarters, his favourite home was the noted Orphan House, at Newcastle, so called because it was designed, and for some time used, as an orphan asylum, as well as a chapel and residence of his itinerants. He laid its foundation on the 20th December, 1742. The site was forty yards in length. In the middle was erected the edifice, leaving room for a small court-yard before, and a garden behind it. Great was the gathering when the ground was broken. "We praised God," says Wesley, "and prayed that he would prosper the work of our hands upon it"—a prayer which still prevails. Three or four times, in the evening service, he was forced to break off preaching, that the excited people might pray and give thanks unto God. On the 25th of March

* Jobson's Chapel and School Architecture, p. 48. London.

following he opened the edifice with divine worship. He was always judicious in the selection of the sites of his chapels, and that of the Orphan House was then, and continues to be, one of the most eligible in Newcastle. The chapel occupied the lower part of the building; it was at first without galleries, but they were subsequently added, and the accommodations were then about sufficient for one thousand hearers. The structure was square; a broad staircase on the outside, at the left corner of the quadrangle, led to a corridor, or covered way, like a balcony, which was the entrance to the gallery, the door into that part of the edifice being exactly above the entrance to the floor of the chapel. Above the chapel were two additional stories, with access to them by a continuation of the staircase on the outside. The lower story contained a spacious hall in the centre, used for the meeting of the bands, and several class-rooms on each side. The upper story contained two suites of apartments, each having its separate staircase, for the accommodation of the preachers' families. Surmounting the building was a single apartment, like a turret: this was the study, and was appropriated to Wesley's use whenever he was in the town. There was a private staircase from the band-room into the gallery of the chapel, by which the preachers descended to the pulpit. There were altogether fifteen rooms in the edifice, besides the band-room, and four small dwellings, which stood in the front of the building, two on each side of the entrance, partly screening the chapel from view.*

When the apartments of the Orphan House were all occupied the establishment was necessarily large, and required the exercise of much skill and diligence in the housekeeper. Grace Murray, whose many excellences not only won, but deserved, more than the esteem of Wesley,† presided over it for several years, and by her rare skill, her piety, and womanly amenities, rendered it a

* Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1843, p. 550. London.

† See Book iii. chap. 2. "She was a young, beautiful, and well-educated widow. . . . Mr. Wesley had employed this lady, who was as discreet as she was attractive, to perform the duty of visiting and organizing the female classes in the north of England. When engaged in this work Mrs. Murray itinerated on horseback, and frequently without any companion. An old man told Dr. Bunting how one day he saw her, at a place in Yorkshire, come forth to the door of a house to take her departure. A servant brought round her steed. She gave a glance to see that all was right, then laid her hand on her horse's shoulder. The well-trained animal immediately knelt down. The lady, who suffered no man to help her in mounting, seated herself lightly on the saddle, and, as in an instant, she was out of sight; and the old man, Mr Bunting tells us, saw her no more, 'except in dreams.' Jabez Bunting preached the funeral sermon of Grace Murray, at Chapel-en-le-Frith,

hallowed and favourite, though always a brief home for the great evangelist and his laborious itinerants. Wesley, than whom no man more enjoyed domestic and studious retirement, often retreated to it from his wanderings and persecutions. "I was ready to say, It is good for me to be here," he wrote at one time; "but," he adds, "I must not build tabernacles; I am to be a wanderer upon earth, and desire no rest till my spirit returns to God."

Years had now passed since Grace Murray, "the desire of his eyes," had welcomed him there, but it was still dear to him. In his seventy-sixth year he writes: "I rested at Newcastle; lovely place, lovely company! But I believe there is another world. Therefore I must arise and go hence;" and the next day he was away, preaching twice before the sun went down.

The Orphan House was the frequent resort of the early itinerants for rest from their labours, or restoration from sickness. They paused there to refresh themselves, among its warm-hearted Methodists, before passing on to the cold receptions of Scotland, and returned to recruit their strength from the bleak winters of the Highlands. Cownley, Hopper, Taylor, Lee, Mather, Wright, and most others of whom we have records, have left expressions of thankfulness and endearment for the comfortable refuge it afforded them. Newcastle was the head-quarters of northern Methodism: its circuit comprised most of the present circuits in the north of England, and reached even to Edinburgh. Thomas Beard, the protomartyr of Methodism, died there, "praising God continually" with his expiring breath. A hundred years after Wesley's first visit, there were more than a hundred places of worship, containing more than twenty thousand sittings, and accommodations for twelve thousand Sunday scholars, within a circle of ten miles around the city.

With his travels during the present decade, Wesley combined no small amount of "pastoral visiting." He went often from house to house among the members of his principal societies. He did so at Kingswood, "taking them from west to east," and saw "that it would be unspeakably useful to them." In London he "began at the east end of the town to visit the society from house to house:" he knew, he says, no branch of the pastoral office which is of greater importance. This he did when more than seventy years old, and

in Derbyshire, in the year 1803." Letter of the Rev. J. H. Rigg, to the author.—Dr. Bunting's Life by his Son, Vol. i. pp. 4, 5. For many most interesting details in connexion with Grace Murray and the Orphan House, see "The Orphan House of Wesley; with Notices of Early Methodism in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and its vicinity. By the Rev. W. W. Stamp," 1863.

when burdened with the cares of all his churches. At Bristol, also, he writes, aged seventy-three, that he began, what he had long intended, to visit the society from house to house, setting apart at least two hours in a day for that purpose.

He plunged into the most wretched places on these pastoral errands. In his seventy-fourth year he says: "I began visiting those of our society who lived in Bethnal Green hamlet. Many of them I found in such poverty as few can conceive without seeing it. O why do not all the rich, that fear God, constantly visit the poor! Can they spend part of their spare time better? Certainly not. So they will find in that day when every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. Such another scene I saw the next day, in visiting another part of the society. I have not found any such distress, no, not in the prison of Newgate. One poor man was just creeping out of his sick-bed, to his ragged wife and three little children, who were more than half naked, and the very picture of famine; when one brought in a loaf of bread, they all ran, seized upon it, and tore it in pieces in an instant. Who would not rejoice that there is another world?"

He frequented also the prisons of the principal cities, preaching, not without hope, to the condemned, the day before their execution. He never declined such opportunities except temporarily in one case. Dr. Dodd, distinguished in London as an eloquent preacher, and noted more as a religious writer than a religious man, had attacked his opinions repeatedly in the public journals. Wesley replied to him briefly.* Ten years passed, when a terrible fate overtook the brilliant divine. He had forged a bond on his former pupil, the Earl of Chesterfield, and was condemned to the gallows. In his imprisonment and despair his thoughts turned to Wesley, who, he now saw, was the man to console and guide him through the brief and dark passage before him. He sent earnest entreaties for a visit from the aged apostle; but Wesley, as loyal to the law as he was compassionate to its victims, and suspecting that he wished only to obtain his aid among influential men against the course of justice—which he judged "would be labour lost"—hesitated to go. The third messenger declared he would not return without him. Wesley went, and has left an "Account of Dr. Dodd," published six years after his execution, which shows the tenderest sympathy and charity for his unfortunate antagonist.† Entering the prisoner's room, he sat down by his bedside, (for the afflicted man had then a fever,) and during an hour ministered to him the consolations of

* Journal, March 5, 1767. † Wesley's Works, vol. xi.

the Gospel. "He spoke," says Wesley, "of nothing but his own soul, and appeared to regard nothing in comparison of it; so that I went away far better satisfied than I came."

In a few days he was with him again. After a long journey he hastened still again to the mournful scene. Sentence of death had been passed upon the prisoner. Unparalleled efforts throughout the country, to obtain a mitigation of the penalty, had failed. Wesley, who was now perhaps the man most welcome on earth to the crushed victim, spent another hour with him, and left him, "quiet and composed, sorrowing, but not without hope," and "receiving every thing as at the hand of God." Two days before the execution he was again by the side of the prisoner. The scene was harrowing, but hopeful. The wife of Dodd came in, but fell fainting, and was caught in the arms of her husband, who bore her to a chair.* Wesley's charitable heart did not entertain a doubt of the spiritual salvation of the fallen, but penitent man. He spoke to him the most fervent words of consolation. "Sir," he said, "I think you do not ask enough or expect enough from God your Saviour. The present blessing you may expect from him is, to be filled with all joy, as well as peace in believing." "O sir," replied the sufferer, "it is not for such a sinner as me to expect any joy in this world. The utmost I can desire is peace; and, through the mercy of God, that I have."

Charles Wesley, who had charge of the London societies, also visited him, and wrote two affecting poems on his fate, one after his execution, rebuking in severe language the merciless disregard of the government for the petitions of the people. Mary Bosanquet, afterward the wife of Fletcher, corresponded with him. Taking leave of her in a final letter, he wrote: "On Friday I am to be made immortal; I die with a heart truly contrite, and broken, under a sense of its great and manifold offences, but comforted and sustained by a firm faith in the pardoning love of Jesus Christ."† At his execution he seemed, says Wesley, entirely composed. When he came out of the gate an innumerable multitude were waiting, many of whom seemed ready to insult him. But the moment they saw him their hearts were touched, and they began to bless him and pray for him. One of his fellow-prisoners appeared to be in utter despair. Dodd, forgetting himself, endeavoured to comfort him, citing for the purpose the promises of the Scriptures. After some time spent in prayer, he pulled the cap over his eyes,

* She died a maniac at Ilford, in Essex.

† Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley, chap. 23.

and, sinking down, seemed to die in a moment. "I make no doubt," adds Wesley, "but in that moment the angels were ready to carry him into Abraham's bosom."

Wesley's theology was strict, but he never despaired of any man who "called upon the name of the Lord." The consolation which he administered to this polished criminal, he preached to the lowest culprits, from the beginning of his career at Oxford till his death; he bore to them in their dungeons the message of the "great salvation;" and scores, probably hundreds, heard from him in their extremity that Christ, "who died for us," is also "the resurrection and the life."

Wesley was busy with his pen throughout this decade, and his publishing house in London poured forth incessantly its pamphlets and volumes, which were distributed by his preachers over the United Kingdom. His labours in this respect seemed indeed enough for the whole time of an industrious man. In 1771 he commenced the issue of a collected edition of his works, in thirty-two duodecimo volumes, which was completed in 1774. In 1778 he began the Arminian Magazine, which he conducted till his death, and which has continued, in various series and under different titles, down to our day—an invaluable repertory of Methodist historical matter, as well as of general religious intelligence and literature.* One of his most important publications, during this period, was his "Calm Address to the American Colonies," published in 1775 which was followed the next year by a tract, entitled "Some Observations on Civil Liberty." His opinions were, of course, loyal to his government, and gave no slight offence to the liberal party both in England and America. He was severely attacked at home, but was defended by Fletcher, who dropped for a season the Calvinistic controversy, to save his friend the necessity of wasting his time in a political dispute upon which he should not have entered. Wesley's Calm Address was mostly a reproduction, in a popular form, of Johnson's Taxation no Tyranny, which was published the same year. He was accustomed thus to compile and abridge works which he considered of importance to common readers; but Toplady seized this opportunity of branding him as a plagiarist, in his "Old Fox Tarred and Feathered." In a subsequent edition, Wesley candidly stated his obligations to Johnson. Fletcher's defence of Wesley's pamphlet interested the government, and procured an offer of its patronage;

* In 1798 the title was changed to "Methodist Magazine," and again, in 1822, to "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine," which name it still bears.

but the pious vicar replied, "I want nothing but more grace." It is due to the memory of Wesley to say that he, meantime, wrote a letter to the premier, Lord North, and to the Secretary of the Colonies, Lord Dartmouth, remonstrating against the war, and pleading for the Americans.* He declares in it that, in spite of all his long rooted prejudices as a Churchman and a loyalist, he cannot avoid thinking, if he think at all, that "these, an oppressed people, asked for nothing more than their legal rights, and that, in the most modest and inoffensive manner that the nature of the thing would allow. But waiving this, waiving all considerations of right and wrong, I ask," he adds with prophetic foresight, "Is it common sense to use force towards the Americans?" "My Lord, whatever has been affirmed, these men will not be frightened; and it seems they will not be conquered so easily as was at first imagined. They will probably dispute every inch of ground, and, if they die, die sword in hand. Indeed, some of our valiant officers say, 'Two thousand men will clear America of these rebels.' No, nor twenty thousand, be they rebels or not, nor perhaps treble that number. They are as strong men as you; they are as valiant as you, if not abundantly more valiant, for they are one and all enthusiasts—enthusiasts for liberty. They are calm, deliberate enthusiasts; and we know how this principle breathes into softer souls stern love of war, and thirst of vengeance, and contempt of death. We know men, animated with this spirit, will leap into a fire, or rush into a cannon's mouth."

The letter, is long and full of sagacious views and statesmanlike counsels.

Wesley was not without some of his old trials during this period, trials among false brethren in his societies, and occasional disturbances from the mob; but his cause was now so strong that the former were readily repressed by his rigorous discipline, and the latter were more annoyances than persecutions—the beating of a drum on the outskirts of his congregation; the assaults of Papists in Ireland, checked usually with promptness by magistrates or gentlemen in the assembly; or the ringing of church bells to drown his voice. The churches began to open their pulpits to him, but in many places he was still repelled from them with scorn; and he records at least one instance in which he and all his preachers were yet denied the Lord's Supper by the order of a bishop.

* It has recently been published. See it in the Appendix to Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i.

Such was the rapid extension of the Methodistic field, during the present decade, that many places were reached by his preachers for the first time, and, not unfrequently, with the early hostilities; and the appearance of a new labourer in an old appointment was often the signal for renewed persecutions.

At the beginning of this period William Darney, a faithful evangelist, had some sore trials. He was accustomed to pay a weekly visit to Almondbury. At first he found seven members in its society; they increased, however, in one month to thirty-two. This rapid increase infuriated the enemies of Methodism in the town, and provoked violent persecutions, to which the rabble were incited by their clergyman, who had declared to them from the pulpit that he was quite sufficient for the ministerial work in the parish, and that they should have no other teacher. The clerk, who was also deputy constable, shared the malice of the minister against the itinerant. One evening, when Darney had been preaching, the former came into the house where he lodged, and seized him in order to drag him out to the mob which was collected in the street; two members of the society, perceiving the preacher's danger from the madness of the people, got hold of him, and in a violent struggle between friends and foes, his coat was rent; but his friends succeeded in rescuing him from the rioters. The week following he visited the place again, nothing daunted, and the people peaceably assembled to worship God in a private house, licensed for that purpose; but soon after the services commenced the rabble gathered about it. Darney had taken his text from 2 Thess. i. 7–10: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." The text seemed a challenge, and while he was exhorting his persecuted brethren to take courage, the clerk came in, followed by the enraged people, and, holding his constable's staff in his hand, said, "I charge thee in the name of King George to come down." Darney promptly answered: "I charge thee in the name of the King of kings that thou let me go on with my sermon." The clerk shouted, "Pull him down!" The mob forthwith seized the preacher, tore his venerable white locks, and he fell heavily to the ground, much injured, for he was a very corpulent man. His friends rallied round him, and with great difficulty led him to his chamber, where they hoped he would be safe from further violence; but the rioters followed him thither, and dragged him into the

street, where they threw him down, fell upon him, and kicked him with their ironshod clogs. They then forced him down the street as far as the vicarage, and there again prostrated him, and abused him in the most barbarous manner, until it was feared that his life would be sacrificed. He at length escaped to his lodgings, though much injured. A company of Methodists came over from Tong to sympathize with their persecuted brethren, and insisted on an appeal to the law. The vicar of Sandal, who was a justice of the peace, and in this instance, at least, more honest than many of his class, was applied to for redress by the Wesleyans and their almost martyred preacher. The clerk cited in his defence the noted Five Mile Act of Charles II. "That act," replied the vicar sternly, "is for thee and thy mob; and as Mr. Darney is a licensed preacher, and was preaching in a licensed house, you might as well have pulled me down when preaching in my own church; and if you do not settle this business before the quarter-sessions, both you and all concerned in this brutal affair will be transported." It appears that they had gone to Sandal in high spirits, assuring themselves of victory, and had given orders that the bells should commence ringing on their return. They were, however, disappointed, and had to slink into the town in disgrace. The matter was soon afterwards settled between the two parties, and the determined itinerant went on his way rejoicing. The little class had, nevertheless, to meet for some time as early as five o'clock in the morning to elude their enemies. They assembled at the house of Abraham Moss, a well-remembered Methodist of that region, whose home and person were assailed in these tumults, and who, many years later, used to refer to them as a veteran to his old battles. "How," he said, "did we love one another! How glad were we to see each other! How happy when we met together!" *

John Nelson had conquered the mobs in Birstal and Leeds, but in some of the small towns of Yorkshire the semi-barbarous people received the itinerants with the old greetings—shouts, and stones, and bludgeons. Seacroft, being at a considerable distance from the parish church, was the scene of "ungodliness in all its forms." William England, however, welcomed the evangelists into his house, and became a hearty Methodist. A skilful and industrious carpenter, he was nevertheless turned away by his employer for his Methodism; but another townsman gave him employment, and said he "might pray on the housetop if he pleased, for he was the best workman in the town." A neighbouring "gentleman" hired

* Wesleyan Magazine, 1842, pp. 619–621. For some characteristic notices and anecdotes of Darney, see Stamp's Orphan House of Wesley, p. 107.

a noted drunkard and fighter to pursue the preachers from village to village, and they continued their labours in the neighbourhood at the hazard of their lives. The ruffian cut off his hair, and wore a hunter's cap, in order that he might be the better prepared to combat with those who fell in his way. He persisted in this bad work for some time, and was the terror of all the serious people in the vicinity; "but the Lord took care of His infant flock, and delivered them out of the hands of the lion," says a pious writer of the times. The hardened persecutor was awakend to a sense of his sin, and, turning away from his vices, joined the very people whom he had so violently opposed. His wife and daughter, who were harmless, quiet persons, were greatly rejoiced at the extraordinary change which had taken place in him, as they were entirely dependent upon him for support; but afterwards seeing him in great distress on account of his sins, they thought he would lose his senses, and never let him rest till they prevailed upon him to leave the society. He had no sooner taken their advice than he again fell into drunkenness, to their unspeakable sorrow; yet he continued to hear the Methodist preachers for nearly forty years, would dispute for them in all companies, and even fight for them when he thought it necessary; but he remained an irreclaimable slave to his besetting sin all the days of his life.

Good William England's house was attacked, and all its windows were broken, because he received the itinerants; but such was the excellence of his character, that a professed atheist came to his help, dispersed the mob, and became his steadfast friend. England died "singing the praises of God," years after these trials had passed. His memory has ever since been precious among his townsmen, and the blessing of Obed-edom rested upon his house. All his family became Methodists. "The Lord," writes one of his sons, "did not leave a hoof behind in spiritual Egypt. We were one of those highly favoured families who go up together with singing to Mount Zion. I do not know that any one family on earth has greater cause to praise the Lord for raising up the Methodist preachers to publish the Gospel of peace in His name, than we." In extreme age this same son writes: "I have good reason to believe that every branch of my father's family is now in heaven except myself." He, soon after, followed them. John Pawson, one of Wesley's veterans, referring to these scenes, wrote early in the present century: "Seacroft was indeed a barren wilderness before Methodism was known there, but since that time what hath God wrought? Why, miracles of mercy and grace." *

* Methodist Magazine, 1803, pp. 110–116.

The trials of these early evangelists made them at once prudent and brave; at least, weak-hearted and weak-headed men were soon confounded, and retreated from their ranks. Matthew Mayer was a "good soldier of the Lord Jesus" among them, and laboured mightily during these times, as also before and after them, though as a humble local preacher. He heard Wesley preach at Manchester, and says he was "wonderfully pleased with the kindness and affection among the early friends of Methodism, who came from different parts on that occasion." He cast in his lot with them and became the ninth member of the class at Stockport. Three years was he seeking "peace with God;" but he found it at last, and then went about the country preaching it to others. Accompanied by John Morris, an earnest layman of Manchester, he established public prayer-meetings in Davy-Hulme, Dukinfield, Ashton, and other places. Such meetings had not been known before in that part of England, Mayer, according to his biographer, being the founder of them.* At Davy-Hulme he gathered fifty converts into classes in a few weeks, and several useful preachers were raised up by his labours. Wesley encouraged him to go about preaching to the poor, and for twenty years he went up and down the land with surprising success. "There are few towns," says his biographer, as late as 1816, "in Cheshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, the south of Lancashire, or the west of Yorkshire, where there are not, to this day, many living witnesses of the Divine power which attended his word." And hundreds who departed in the triumphs of faith, and whose first religious impressions were received under his preaching, were ready to welcome him to the shores of blessedness when he reached them. He was solicited to go to Oldham to preach in the street. The inhabitants of that town were uncommonly rude and demoralized, and had violently driven away every Methodist preacher who had come among them. Mayer knew this fact, as well as the general character of the people; but considering the invitation as a call from God, and having confidence "that his God would deliver him from even the power of these lions," he promised to go on the following Sabbath. The mob, encouraged by the principal people of the town, were determined he should not preach, and that if he attempted it he should be put into the dungeon, which, in consideration of his being a "respectable person," they had the politeness to have swept out and furnished with clean straw for his accommodation. A number of his friends from Dukinfield and Ashton went with him, expecting serious opposition.

* Methodist Magazine, 1816, p. 6.

They arrived before noon, and, when the service of the Church was ended, he asked a townsman to let him stand at his door. The man swore if he came thither he would cleave his skull. He then went to another door to ask the same favour; the instant reply was, "Yea, and welcome." Here, having mounted a four-footed bench as his pulpit, he gave out a hymn and prayed, and the people were all quiet. But when he was about to address them a numerous mob came up, headed by the constables and churchwardens. These demanded with vehemence, "By what authority do you come hither?" He replied, for he was a self-respectful, brave man, "By what authority do you ask me?" They said, "We are the constables and churchwardens of Oldham; we do not want any of your preaching here." The mob cried out, "Pull him down, pull him down, and we will take him away!" He then, addressing himself to the constables, said: "You have no authority to pull me down: I have authority both from God and man. I am protected by the laws of my country, and if you pull me down you must take the consequences. What I desire of you is that you will hear me patiently, and if you have any thing to object I will answer your objections afterwards." The constables required him to produce his authority. He replied, "Gentlemen, I am not obliged to do this to you, but to satisfy the people I will produce it." Having then read his licence to preach, he said, "This is my protection; let any man who dare lay hands on me. And since you are the constables, and are sworn to keep the peace, I charge you not only to keep the peace yourselves, but also to take care that the king's peace be not broken in your presence, as you will be answerable before your betters on another day." This bold and unexpected challenge quite stunned them, and they stood looking at one another not knowing what to do, while the preacher proclaimed his text: "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." He commanded their serious attention, and had not proceeded far in his discourse before one of the constables, turning pale, began to tremble; the word had reached his heart. The other perceiving this effect, was filled with rage, yet dared not lay hands on the preacher; but after some time contrived to upset the bench on which he stood. Mayer stepped to the ground, and being still on a high position, went on with his discourse, till at length the constable and a few of his adherents pushed him among the people. The mob now began to quarrel among themselves, some being for and some against the preacher. He and his friends, however, walked quietly away from the spot and, as

they went along the street, a grave-looking old man came with his hat in his hand, and said, "Sir, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof, but, if you please, you shall preach in my house, and welcome." The house was instantly filled with people, and the preacher finished his discourse without any further interruption. He had prevailed, and under this sermon "it pleased God," says the biographer of Mayer, "that the old man, his wife, and a daughter were all deeply awakened, and from that day they began to seek the Lord." A licence was obtained for the house, and the Manchester preachers occupied it at their visits to Oldham till they obtained a large room, which was at length superseded by a commodious chapel.

Some years after these trials an interesting scene occurred at Oldham. Mayer had been preaching in the chapel, and was holding a Love-feast, when he related the circumstances of his first visit to the town, and contrasted the reception he then met with their present comfortable and flourishing condition. When he had concluded, a woman stood up and said: "I am a daughter of the old man who received you into his house: my father, and mother, and sister are dead; and, thanks be to God! they all died happy in the Lord, and I am left a living witness of his pardoning mercy." Another then rose and said: "I am the husband of that old man's daughter, and I can also rejoice in God my Saviour." After him an elderly man rose and said: "I am the man that first gave you liberty to stand at my door, and now, blessed be God! I enjoy a sense of his favour which is better than life." Some time after this Mayer was requested to go to Oldham, to preach a funeral sermon for a woman of whose name he had no recollection. Upon inquiry, it appeared that she was a child at the time of his first visit, and was so much affected under the sermon, that in the simplicity of her heart, having heard that she ought to tread in the steps of the righteous, she followed him down the street, literally treading in his footsteps in the throng of his persecutors. God blessed her simple earnestness, and caused her to grow up in his fear. She became an eminently pious Christian, and died in the triumph of faith.

Such scenes were of continual occurrence during these eventful times, inspiring the persecuted evangelists with thankful courage, and confounding their enemies. For thirty years Matthew Mayer's name was prominent on the Local Preachers' Plan of Stockport circuit. He preached often at Sheffield, Mansfield, Bolton, Rochdale, and Oldham. He supplied Oldham-street Chapel, in Man-

chester, once a month, and it is said that, after labouring there more than forty years, no other preacher commanded a larger congregation than was attracted by his humble ministrations.

John Oliver had some good and some hard times during this period. He was an energetic labourer, and noted in his day among Wesley's "helpers." His autobiography, buried among the contents of the old Arminian Magazine, is full of strange incidents and adventures.* The little class at Stockport, which had welcomed Matthew Mayer, gave Oliver also to the Methodist ministry. In a conversation with one of its members, he endeavoured to convince the Methodist that his religion was false and dangerous to the "Church," of which Oliver was a loyal, though not a very devout friend. Before they parted the Methodist convinced him that he knew little or nothing about true religion. He afterward avoided his pious friend, but resolved to give up his favourite cock-fighting and other diversions, to pray, fast, go faithfully to church, and say the collects daily. His father, in whose shop he was employed, disliked his growing seriousness, and induced him to spend a Sunday evening with some gay comrades at an inn, but he returned home with a smitten conscience, and was in agony for some days. Being invited to the Methodist meetings, his father threatened to "knock his brains out" if he went, though he should be hung for it. He clandestinely went, however, and returned home pondering with hope on some striking cases of Christian experience which he had heard in the little company. He got upon his knees in secret, and while praying received the "witness" of his acceptance with God, and thought even that he heard a voice saying that his sins were all forgiven. "I loved God," he afterward wrote, "I loved all mankind; I could not tell whether I was in the body or out of it." Forthwith he joined the Wesleyans. His irritable father was enraged, and addressed warnings to all the Stockport Methodists, forbidding them to receive his son into their meetings or houses. He perilled the life of the young man, shivering bludgeons and chairs upon his head. The whole town, it is said, talked of these facts; and the impetuous parent, who really, though roughly, loved him, relented, weeping over his boy, and beseeching him not to break his heart in his old age. Three clergymen of Stockport were called in to reclaim the youth, and he was offered the privilege of going to the church daily if he would only avoid the Methodists. Oliver was ready to do anything to conciliate his father, except to

* Arminian Magazine, 1779, p. 417. Southey has caricatured him as usual. See his American editor, Dr. Curry's note, Life of Wesley, chap. 17.

violate his conscience in this respect. His heart, he says, was "kept in fear and love" for some time under all these trials; but having, at an unguarded moment, "given way to temptation, and grieved the Holy Spirit," he was overwhelmed with darkness and dismay. The tempter assured his tender conscience that he was forsaken of God. He slept little, ate hardly anything, and sank into profound melancholy. Rising one morning very early, he went to the river and threw himself into it, to end his wretched life. He was rescued, but how he knew not, "unless God had sent one of his ministering spirits to help him in his time of need." Providentially he was carried to the house of a Methodist, where there was preaching the very same evening; but "Satan," he says, "came upon him like thunder," accusing him as a self-murderer, and he tried again to commit suicide by strangling himself with his handkerchief. His father was called in, and being at heart a generous, though obstinate man, bore him home with tenderness. The young man had evidently been rendered insane by his persecutions and mental conflicts, and his mind, more than his body, needed relieving treatment. His anxious father sent for a physician —a godless one, as Oliver assures us, who undertook to grapple with the case most vigorously, bleeding the sufferer profusely, blistering his feet, back, and head, and physicking him thoroughly. This treatment, pursued for nearly two months, did not restore him. Some of his religious friends recommended him to go to Manchester and escape the spiritual trials of his irreligious home. He went thither; his mother pursued him and brought him back by a stratagem, but he had now full permission to go among the Methodists, who had been fasting and praying for him. With them he found the medicine which his disturbed mind needed. "My strength," he says, "came again; my light, my life, my God. I was filled with all joy and peace in believing." He soon became a class-leader, and in due time Wesley called him into the itinerant ranks, where he met with "fiery trials," but bore them bravely.

In 1774 he was arrested, on Chester circuit, while preaching to a thousand people in the open air at Wrexham. A constable came with orders from a neighbouring justice to apprehend him. Oliver desired him to stay till he had finished his discourse, when he would go with him. The officer agreed so to do; but the justice impatient of the delay, came himself, and seized the preacher by the collar. "Sir," said Oliver, "here is no riot; all is peaceable; and I am a licensed preacher." The justice dragged him on, nevertheless, till he

saw the constable, and then charged the latter to carry him to prison. As they were walking he said to the officer, "I will not go unless you have a written order." The latter went to the justice, and returned with an order to "convey the body of John Oliver, a vagrant preacher, who hath unlawfully assembled a concourse of people against the peace of our sovereign lord the king, to the House of Correction in the town of Wrexham."

The result was that he was cast into prison, being conducted thither by the constable through an almost impenetrable crowd. He seized the opportunity, before he was shut in, to "exhort" the multitude, explaining to them his faith, and to pray with them, "whereby he was greatly refreshed and most of the people deeply affected." Some of them were ready to fight for him. One asked him to preach at his door, and swore he would defend him against all opposers; another offered him bail to the amount of five hundred pounds. Many wished, as with godly John Nelson, at Bradford, to spend the night with him in prison; but he chose to be alone with his own thoughts, meditating on the best means of defending himself. So well did he address himself to his persecutors, when summoned before the magistrate, on the morrow, that he triumphed. The attorney was confounded, and retreated before the case was through. The justice was enraged, pronounced his licence good for nothing, and threatened to have him whipped out of the town, unless he promised never to appear there again. "I am an Englishman," replied Oliver, manfully; "I will make no such promise." The defeated magistrate was glad at last to order him "to go about his business." "So," says the victorious itinerant, "I took my leave, rejoicing that I was counted worthy to suffer for my Master's sake."

During our present period he laboured with much success, and not a few conflicts, on Bristol, Chester, Sheffield, Manchester, Liverpool, and Macclesfield circuits—long "rounds," with hard work, but great triumphs. "God has wrought wonderfully of late in Bristol," he wrote; "he is blessing us on every side; some hundreds have, within this year, been added to the societies." At Thong the people fell in agony to the ground, crying out, "Lord, help me; save, or I perish." On Sheffield circuit there was "a great outpouring of the Spirit of God, and throughout the year there appeared to be a general moving among the people." On Manchester circuit "we had," he says, "some severe trials; but going on hand in hand, we were more than conquerors." After thirty years of indefatigable labour, he says: "I bless God that I

never was in any circuit where I had not some seals of my mission."*

Alexander Mather was one of the most notable heroes of Methodism in the last century. He was a Scotchman, and had not a little of the energy and tenacity of Scotch temper in him; but he was distinguished by his pathetic eloquence, and his tenderness for the poor and suffering. John Pawson, one of his old fellow-labourers, lamenting his death, which was as courageously met as the trials of his life, says: "Considered as a man, he was possessed of real greatness of mind, so that where the honour of God or the salvation of souls was concerned, as he would spare no pains, so he dreaded no danger, and was not ashamed to speak with his enemies in the gate. He feared the face of no man. He was remarkably ready in answering those who opposed the work of God, in however high a station they might stand; for although he highly reverenced magistrates, and gave honour to whom honour was due, yet he was not to be terrified from his duty by the threatenings of any man, but would resolutely go forward with his work, in the name and in the strength of the Lord God."†

A nice sense of honour had he, also, respecting his Methodistic work, and traitors or cowards in the cause dreaded his manly rebuke. Benson, the Methodist commentator, said that, during thirty years' acquaintance with him, he never knew any thing affect the generous Scotchman more deeply than offences which touched the cause of God, or affected the welfare of the Methodist Connection.‡

By his strict Presbyterian education he grew up with unsullied virtue and unusual intelligence. When he married he resolved to have family prayers with his wife. She was soon converted under them; but his own religious anxieties were only deepened by the habit, till his "flesh wasted away like a garment fretted by the moth, and his bones were ready to start through his skin." While listening to Wesley in London, the peace of God dawned into his troubled mind. He abandoned his Sunday work as a baker, became a band-leader, a class-leader, a local preacher, and at last an itinerant. His employment allowed him no time for preaching, except what he took from his sleep, and for some time he slept but "about eight hours a week," preaching in the evening, working most of the night, and preaching again at five o'clock in the morning. He gave himself fully to the ministry in 1757, walking a hundred and fifty

* A cloud seems to have gathered at last over this laborious man. His name disappears from the minutes in 1783. No reason for the fact is given.

† Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, vol. i. p. 426. ‡ Ibid., p. 412.

miles to his first circuit. During his first year he was thoroughly initiated into the trials of his new life. A mob, accompanied by a drum, attacked him while he was addressing a crowd in the market-place at Boston. He was pursued a mile out of the town, dirt and stones "flying like hail on every side." He attempted to return for his horse, but was knocked down and beaten till his breath was nearly gone. On recovering himself he endeavoured to go on, but was a second time prostrated by the rioters. They allowed him at last to crawl over a ditch, but one of them again seized him by the collar to drag him to the horse-pond, while others plastered him over with dirt. He was now in a sad plight; his Scotch spirit would have resented these wrongs, but that would not befit his Christian character, so he submitted, and would probably have perished, had not a gentleman interfered as the mob were about to cast him into the pond. While he walked through the town they followed him, throwing dirt from the kennels into his face; when out of breath, he would stop and calmly face them during a few moments of rest, for they "seldom looked him in the face." He was struck near the temple by a stone. At the inn some of his friends washed his wounds; but when he mounted his horse to go on his way, he was assailed by a shower of missiles, and the welkin rang with the shouts of the rabble. The next day, however, he was in the town again, and, appealing to the laws, he compelled the reluctant magistrates to summon the leaders of the mob, and secured, by his coolness and determination, the right of preaching there when he pleased. This hard beginning made a hero of the cool-headed and strong-hearted Scotchman; he was resolute but prudent, and mastered similar perils with courage and skill. At Wolverhampton his chapel was pulled down. Most of the windows of his friends' houses were broken, and it was hazardous for a Methodist to pass in the streets. The rioters marched with flying ribbons, were saluted with bells and bonfires, and burned Mather and one of his friends in effigy. But his manful appeals to the magistrates alarmed them into some regard for their duty; he declared to an attorney who had led the mob, and made the first breach in the chapel, that he must rebuild it or be tried for his life, and it was accordingly rebuilt. At Stroud the mob "raged like wild beasts, and the whole country was in terror." Mather rode into the town to face them. At Dudley, Darlaston, and Wednesbury—old theatres of riot, as we have seen—the Methodists were threatened by invasions of the rabble from other places; but "such powerful revivals" had prevailed in these towns, that there were

few left who would either join in persecutions or allow others to attempt them. The rioters approached Darlaston, but "a hog-butcher," who lived near the preaching-house, hearing the alarm, leaped out of bed, seized his cleaver, and, running out, swore death to the first that should attack the building. So unexpected a reception quite discouraged them, and made them run away faster than they came.

During our present period Mather laboured on extensive circuits with great success and many such conflicts. At Monmouth the churchwardens went before him into his chapel and shut the doors. Meantime the street was all in an uproar; but the mob opened to the right and left, and let him pass to the door. It was fast, but after some delay was opened to him, and he faced the wardens. One of them asked what authority he had to preach. Mather asked him who he was. The "churchwarden," was his reply. "Then you have no authority to question me," responded the itinerant; "I shall not show mine but to a proper person, and I desire you will either behave well or withdraw." Another said: "Sir, will you show it me? I am the chief constable." He answered, "I will." While the officer was reading, the churchwarden looked over him and said: "This will not do." "Sir, it will do for me," replied Mather; "and I require all of you who stay to behave in a becoming manner." The chief constable withdrew; but the crowd was so great that half could not get in, and those without were so noisy that nothing could be heard. The mayor sent a summons to the preacher to attend him in the morning at the Town-hall, where a curious scene ensued. The mayor, the clerk of the peace, and all the chief men of the town assembled; the rector and curate used some harsh words, and the assembled dignitaries asked so many questions, and spoke so vehemently, that it was impossible to answer them. "Gentlemen," cried the itinerant, "be pleased to speak one at a time." But this could not be done. They all agreed in clamorously requiring him to promise that he would come there no more. "I told them," he says, "I would make no such promise; no, not if my life depended upon it." The ludicrous assembly broke up; they parted as they met, and the invincible Scotchman maintained his right to the ground, and the next day got safe to Bristol.

Still later he had equal trials at Padiham. The society was erecting a chapel; but an enemy, pretending to a claim on the ground, tore down a part of the unfinished walls. Masons came at night and broke in the doors and windows, and attempted to prostrate the building, but, becoming alarmed, ran away. A watch had

to be appointed to guard the premises. A subsequent attack was made with crowbar and pickaxe, but some townsmen checked it. A battle ensued, and the "gentleman" opponent of the Methodists was rolled in the dirt. The persecutors were bound over to the assizes; but twenty-seven members of the society were summoned by a warrant before the justice of the peace. Mather's cool sense prevailed before the magistrate, the difficulty was adjusted, and, "the poor people went home in peace." Thomas Taylor, whose "adventures" at Glasgow have already been narrated, was about these times, and in this same town thrice pulled down from his out-door pulpit by a clergyman, who led the mob, arrayed in his gown and cassock.

Mather did much during these years for the promotion of the Methodist doctrine of Sanctification on his long and laborious circuits. "It was," says Benson, "his chief support under the many trials he met with from affliction and pain, from mobs, by scoffs and insults, by dirt, stones, and brickbats." He endured and laboured on through the century, and closed it at last, as we shall see, with a death of triumph befitting his heroic life. Wesley ordained him with his own hands, and made him a "superintendent" or bishop * of his societies.

The early Methodist records speak of a young man who, about the beginning of this decade, stood on the steps of the Town-hall of Bishop's Castle, proclaiming to a large crowd, as his text, "Seek the Lord and ye shall live." The town was wicked to a proverb. He gathered his congregation by the public crier, whom he paid for the purpose. Some of the throng threw their hats in his face, but the tears trickled from the eyes of others, and "the power of the Highest reached many hearts."

The preacher had been a Cornish miner; he was devoutly disposed from his infancy, and bore in his memory, as one of his earliest recollections, the image of his "old grandmother lifting up her hands and eyes in prayer as she passed into the eternal world." The Methodist itinerants penetrated to his native town of Sancreed, and preached in his father's house. They talked with the boy about divine things, and he never forgot their simple instructions. He heard one of them preach, who appeared to keep his eye fixed upon him, and whose every word seemed to be directed to him. He was plunged for some time in deep distress; but, while praying in secret, the words, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven," flashed upon his awakened conscience, and "in that instant," he

* Myles's Chron. Hist., p. 175; Smith's Hist. Meth., vol. i. p. 547. 1862.

says, "my burden was removed, and my soul was filled with peace and joy." He was soon after impressed for the navy, but a good Quaker was passing at the moment, and, struck by the expressive innocence of his youthful face, pleaded with the magistrate to save him from the temptations of the sea, and thus rescued him for the Methodist ministry. He studied the doctrine of Christian Perfection, and, with his pious mother, consecrated himself to a life of entire holiness. The dark mines in which he toiled were sanctuaries of prayer to him, and his life was saved in one of the perils which frequently attend that employment, by the fact that he was upon his knees at the moment of the accident. He had knelt but about two minutes when the earth gave way above him; a large stone fell before him and reached above his head; another fell at his right hand, and a third on his left, each, like the first, being higher than himself; a fourth fell upon these, about four inches above him, and sheltered him. Had he been in any other posture than that of his devotions, he would, he says, "have been crushed to pieces." But he was able to breathe through the crevices of the superincumbent rocks, and pray on till the mass was removed, and he was brought safely out, rejoicing and giving thanks to God.

More than ever did he now devote himself to Christian usefulness, till we find him standing on the Town-hall steps of Bishop's Castle, in a wondering crowd, with his Bible in his hand.

Such was the early history of Richard Rodda, a man of precious memory in many parts of England.* He laboured with great success and frequent persecutions during these times. At Tenbury he was resisted on the charge of "coming there to preach against the Church." The greatest confusion prevailed in the assembly. Some of the rioters brought powder, and filled the place with its sulphurous smoke; but a rough, honest countryman, who had come through curiosity to hear the preaching, and sat near Rodda, with a large bludgeon in his hand, rose from his seat when he heard the explosion, and, with terrible oaths, swore he would "knock out the brains" of the disturbers if they repeated the offence. The preacher had scarcely less trouble to pacify him than to control the mob. When Rodda appeared in the town again he sent the public crier around to announce preaching in the open air. The rabble gathered about his lodgings half an hour before the time, and when they saw him through the windows, shouted "There he is!" Rodda threw up the sash and said, "I am here, and will be with you soon." At the appointed hour he "went out in the strength of the Lord."

* Life of Rodda, in Early Methodist Preachers, vol. ii.

Some of the throng pelted him with dirt and broken tiles, but they neither hurt nor hindered him. Before he ended his sermon the rioters got a piece of wood, dressed it like a man, and, putting an old wig on its head, danced it up and down before him; "but," says the good man, "I looked up to God, and was preserved from levity, and the mob from this time became more civilized."

Day after day he had such encounters. At Hereford he took his stand with his back against St. Nicholas' Church, and gathered a congregation by singing a hymn; several gentlemen and two or three clergymen were among them. A baker confronted him passionately with the charge of preaching against the Church, but soon retreated. Some of the rabble tried to throw a pail of milk upon him, but failed in the attempt. Others threw mud into his face and eyes. "It so besmeared me," he says, "that I could proceed no farther." The mob thought they had conquered him, but were disappointed; he cited the chief persecutor before the magistrate; returned subsequently, and was never defeated again.

Throughout this period he laboured, with almost invariable success, in Cornwall, in Wales, and in Oxfordshire. "The power of God," he says, "was with me 'both to wound and to heal.'" The cries and prayers of his hearers often constrained him to stop in his sermons and mingle his tears and supplications with theirs. He sometimes brought to the Conference reports of a hundred increase, for the year, in single appointments of his circuit. On his Oxfordshire circuit there was such an awakening among the people as the oldest men living could not remember.

The itinerants of that day suffered not only from mobs, but from exposure to rain and cold, from poor food and damp beds. Richard Rodda fell at last by an attack of asthma, produced by such hardships. After forty-five years of ministerial labours and sufferings he could say, while gasping for breath, "I could go to Smithfield and die for the Lord Jesus; I know I could." "I suffer much, but God is with me. It is now about fifty-eight years since the Lord set my soul at glorious liberty, and I have found him to be a gracious God all the way, faithful to his promise. Not one word hath failed. Glory be to his name! Do not pray for my restoration, or for life. For why should I live when my work is done? Let me enter into the joy of my Lord."

Such are but examples of what were still no uncommon trials of Wesley's humble "helpers." They were the right class of men to rescue the neglected people from their demoralization. They had come from among the people, and knew how to address them; they

knew their vices, could sympathize with their wretchedness, and bear patiently their outrages. They seldom or never abandoned any place because of its hostility, but persisted till they conquered —till they gathered societies, and erected simple, but comfortable chapels among the degraded habitations of their reclaimed persecutors. They suffered much from poverty, for few of the circuits yet afforded them competent support, but they shared gladly the hard fare of the people. Not a few of them, unable to obtain horses, walked their long "rounds," preaching from village to village. John Pritchard, who wore himself out in the ministry, writes to Wesley, toward the end of this period, that his horse became sick, and being poor—"for a Methodist preacher is likely to be so as long as he lives" —and the people of his circuit poor also, he had travelled, during the winter and spring, on foot about twelve hundred miles. "Meantime," he added, "whatsoever I parted with on earth was amply made up to me in Christ and his people; my love to them was so great that I could willingly have died to promote their welfare." * They were not content with confronting mobs, and preaching from day to day, but sought out the perishing poor in their lowly homes. They were instant in season, and, as most men would think, out of season also, with the word of exhortation, when they met them in the streets and on the highways. One of these faithful labourers, writing to Wesley of his ministerial work about this time, speaks of pressing through the wintry storms on foot when the snow was knee deep. He stops to pray with a young man on a mountain side; he meets farther on a rude traveller and his wife plodding their way. "Lord," cries the good man in his heart, "what shall I say to these, Thy creatures, to induce them to serve Thee?" And saying a great deal to them about Christ and eternity, he begs them to kneel down with him that he may pray with them. The poor and miserable instinctively know how to appreciate men whom they thus see in earnest for their welfare, and suffering privations and toils greater than their own to secure it. The two travellers knelt down on the earth with the itinerant while he "wrestled with God for them," and when they rose the astonished man felt himself unworthy to shake the hand of the preacher, and the woman, with flowing tears, bowed and kissed it. Such is the human heart when rightly touched. "O how willingly would I have washed the feet of those poor creatures for whom Christ died!" says the evangelist; and he could write from his laborious circuit, that "since the Conference I have been completely happy, and have found rest in all

* Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, vol. iii.

circumstances, both as a Christian and as a preacher; whether going by the way-side, or lying down, or rising up, the Lord has been my portion, and satisfies my soul with the treasures of His house." * Such facts illustrate the men, their work, and their times, better than any general remarks. Sacrificing all things for Christ, and living in daily view of heaven, how could these men be otherwise than blessed? Their very afflictions were a part of their fellowship with Christ—the "fellowship of his sufferings;" and they had a right to feel that they were walking in his footsteps, "going about doing good."

While Wesley and his hosts of itinerants were thus pursuing their evangelical toils, some of his veterans, exhausted by travel and suffering, had to retire from the ranks, while others fell at their posts. He has commemorated some of the latter in his Journal.

In 1744, John Downes fell in the pulpit at West-street Chapel, London, while preaching from the text, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," and spoke no more till his spirit returned unto God. "I feel such a love for the people of West-street," he said, before he went to chapel, "that I could be content to die with them, and must be with them this evening." His voice failing, he sank upon his knees in the desk, and was found in that posture by those who bore him to his home. "O for an end like his!" wrote Charles Wesley; "it is the most enviable, the most desirable I ever heard of." He left a widow, and but one sixpence of property.† He had fought a good fight through thirty-one years of itinerant life; had preached in nearly all parts of the United Kingdom; had been fiercely persecuted, impressed as a soldier, and imprisoned in Lincoln jail. It was befitting that he should die so sublimely. He was a man of great character, and great and various talents. Wesley dares to compare his mathematical genius with that of Sir Isaac Newton.‡ Without education as an artist, he cut at the top of a stick and afterward engraved the portrait of Wesley, which was prefixed to his "Notes on the New Testament." For several months before his death he enjoyed far deeper communion with God than ever he had before; and for some days he had frequently said, "I am so happy that I scarce know how to live. I enjoy such fellowship with God as I thought could not be had on this side heaven." "After a long conflict with pain, sickness, and poverty, he gloriously rested from his labours," says Wesley, "and entered into the joy of his Lord."

* Arminian Magazine, 1788, p. 48.

† Moore's Life of Wesley, book vii. chap. 3. ‡ Journal, November, 1774.

In the same year a striking spectacle was seen in the streets of Leeds. Charles Wesley's unrivalled funeral lyrics had spread over England, and as all families know, sooner or later, the sadness of death, they had become generally known. They were heard at the death-beds of most Methodists, and it had grown into a custom among them to carry their dead along the highways singing these pathetic but exultant dirges. Amid thousands of spectators, a procession nearly half a mile long,* sobbing and singing, bore the remains of the heroic John Nelson through the town of Leeds, and along the highway, to lay him to rest in his native village of Birstal, the place of his first ministrations and greatest triumphs. Aged men who remembered and shared his earliest trials, and children who had heard the story of them told at the fireside by their fathers, followed him to the grave as a grateful people follow a fallen hero who has helped to save their country. Leeds had seldom or never witnessed a more affecting scene.

The extraordinary life and character of this truly noble man have already been given with some detail in our narrative, and need not here be reviewed. It is sufficient to say that perhaps no lay preacher, ever raised up by Methodism, has presented a better exemplification of what such an evangelist should be, a more admirable example of heroism, of magnanimity, good sense, sound piety, hard work, and courageous suffering. He was steadfast in his ministerial labours for thirty-three years. As Whitefield said of himself, Nelson had spoken so much for Christ in life that it was not necessary he should add anything in dying. He died suddenly. Returning to his lodgings from the home of one of his brethren, he was seized with sickness, soon became insensible, and, before the sun went down, departed to his eternal rest. A humble mason, pursuing his craft by day and preaching at night, Nelson nevertheless became a thorough English gentleman, in the best sense of that phrase: Wesley attached no slight importance to that "respectability" which grows out of good manners, appropriate dress, and self-respect. It had no small moral value in his estimation. He promoted it among his people, and especially among his preachers. A public teacher should be, in his opinion, a model gentleman, as, in his "Address to the Clergy," he pronounced St. Paul to have been. He directed his preacher at Edinburgh to come down, with his family, out of the upper stories of an obscure and dirty quarter of the city, to a residence more suitable to the dignity of his office, and more favourable to his influence among the people. After

* Wes. Meth. in Congleton Circuit, chap. 2.

dining with a company of Moravian missionaries, who had assembled in London, to depart thence on their destinations to various parts of the world, he records his admiration of the good sense of the fraternity, in selecting for its foreign messengers men not only of piety and talents, but of cultivated manners, of good mien, and even of good features. Both by example and precept did he teach his preachers to add to their higher virtues these minor advantages, until he rendered them, what they have ever since been in their Conference assemblies, one of the most respectable-looking bodies of men to be seen in their country. John Nelson's good sense could reconcile Christian humility and self-sacrifice with this self-respect. The native magnanimity of his character was rendered the more commanding by his good manners, his noble mien, his decent attention to dress and to all desirable appearances. Personally, he would have given dignity to any archiepiscopal throne of the realm. Among the hundreds of clerical portraits in the Arminian or Wesleyan Magazine, none equal his in nobleness of person, tasteful simplicity of dress, manliness of attitude, and the repose, strength, and benignity of his features. Methodism was a great blessing to his family as well as to himself; his wife became an intelligent class-reader, and two of their descendents useful preachers. *

Another death among his fellow-labourers, recorded by Wesley during these times, was that of Silas Told, a name that may appropriately he associated with that of John Nelson. A very notable character was this "honest Silas Told"—a reclaimed sailor, who became pre-eminently the good Samaritan of London, the real though unrecognized chaplain of all its then wretched prisons, and of most within ten miles around it. He went to sea in his childhood, and passed through astonishing adventures, which he has recorded, with frank and affecting simplicity, in a style of terse and flowing English that De Foe might have envied. He was drowned, and with difficulty restored to life; he was shipwrecked, taken by pirates, and spent years among the horrible atrocities of the slave-trade, and perhaps no record of those abominations is more appalling than that which he has given. Tired of a wayward and vicious life he married a virtuous young woman, and settled in an honest business in London. An apparently accidental but really providential incident there brought him into connection with the Methodists of the

* John Nelson, his grandson, joined Wesley's Conference in 1789, and was for more than forty years a laborious and eminently successful minister of Christ. William Nelson was a local preacher in Leeds: see Treffry's Memoir of Rev. John Smith.

Foundry, and led him into a career of usefulness which has not been excelled by any city missionary or prison chaplain since his day. A poor young Methodist applied to him for employment, but was repelled with rudeness, which he bore with so much Christian meekness that the naturally generous heart of the sailor relented. The pious youth was called back and employed. He led Told to hear Wesley at the Foundry; the sailor's wife soon went thither also; and after no small amount of objections, rude polemics, and religious anxieties, both became devoted and happy Methodists. Family prayer was introduced into their simple home; and Told, who had received some early education, and had taught school a short time after leaving the seas, now became an intelligent if not talented man. His career thus far would have furnished an interesting example of the power of Methodism to reclaim the lowest classes of men; but he could not stop at this point. We have seen that there were desks for a school, at one end of the Band-room, in the Foundry chapel. Told, at the direction of Wesley, sacrificed his business to take charge of a few charity children there, with ten shillings a week for his salary. He speedily collected threescore boys and six girls. He worked at his task from five in the morning till five in the evening. More than seven years did he spend in these useful labours, training nearly three hundred boys, "most of whom were fitted for almost any trade."

Attending with his scholars at one of Wesley's five o'clock morning sermons, the text—"I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me not"—struck the heart and conscience of the generous mariner. He sunk even into despondency for several days, under the impression that he had neglected the sufferers of Newgate, and he resolved thenceforth to do his duty toward them; but he knew not the measures requisite to be pursued for his good purpose.

A devout Methodist woman who visited the prisons, soon reported to him that ten men, in Newgate, were about to die. He found them out, got them together in one cell, and preached to them repentance and hope, declaring that "the King of heaven had laid down his life for the chief of sinners;" that "he certainly died for them," and quoting the examples of the repentance and salvation of David, Mary Magdalene, Peter, and the thief on the cross. Eight of these criminals were hung at once, Told riding with them in the cart, and praying for them under the gallows. His faithful ministrations had led them all to repentance, and they died with contrite hope of the mercy of God.

Having thus begun his new career of usefulness, he never

slackened in it till he was called to his reward in heaven. For more than thirty years no man was better known, or more welcome in all the prisons of the metropolis and the neighbouring towns, than Silas Told. All sorts of criminals, Papists and Protestants, educated men, officers of the army and navy, as well as the poor, who had no other friend, not only respected him, but clung to him in their anguish for counsel and consolation. He seems to have had, by his deep piety and sailor-like generosity and simplicity, a peculiar power over the rudest minds. Notwithstanding no little opposition at first, from not only prisoners, but keepers, and "ordinaries," or chaplains, he persisted till he won his way; for through "all this," he writes, "I burst the more vehemently, so that I became, in the name of God, resolute in that point, and would take no denial." Turnkeys, sheriffs, hangmen, wept as they witnessed his exhortations and prayers. They sent for him when new cases occurred which his tireless zeal had not yet discovered. They opened passages through the clamorous and ribald crowd to the gallows for him; hardened men, as they usually were, they came to know and love him as the good Samaritan whom death alone could separate from the objects of his sympathy. The ordinaries of the prisons, who often read their prayer-books as a mere ceremony on these harrowing occasions, seem to have been his chief opposers. During three years one of them frequently stationed himself, on Sunday mornings, a few doors from Newgate, to obstruct his entrance; and, breaking up a society of thirty members which he had formed among the poor debtors, stopped his preaching on that side of the prison; but he still found access to the capital felons, and he formed another Methodist society of thirty-six members among the debtors, who were brought under such discipline that "they would not suffer any individual among them to live in any outward sin." He preached in every prison, as well as many workhouses, in and about London, and frequently travelled to almost every town within twelve miles of the metropolis.

It is dangerous for an historian of Methodism to read his extraordinary autobiography; if the temptation to quote too largely its affecting incidents can be resisted, still his eye and hand risk their capacity for the task of the day, after tracing its heart-breaking tale of sorrows. Few if any records show more shockingly the state of the prisons and of the penal laws, and the barbarous concomitants of the executions of that age; yet few more strikingly prove the beneficent influence which, since the epoch of Methodism, has been exerted by the improved Christianity of England on her prison

discipline, and on her whole social life.* The enormous number of capital condemnations, the haste of the judicial process in such cases, the indisposition of the responsible government officers to inquire into them, occasioned by their social distance, led to appalling abuses of the law, and to frequent and agonizing sufferings in instances of comparative and sometimes of complete innocence. Told was often the only comforter of such victims, the only man who fully ascertained their degree of guilt or their entire innocence. He wept with them, and followed them with his blessing to the grave, and remained sometimes the sole protector of their wretched families. He gives but occasional examples, yet too many for a man of sensibility to read. One of them was a young and guiltless woman, apparently amiable and Christian in her character. Told besought her, on the morning of her execution, to confess if she were guilty, warning her that there was no hope for her beyond the grave if she did not. She answered him "with meekness and simplicity," protest-

* I am tempted to quote, as not altogether irrelevant to my pages, a case which affords an example of the executions of those demoralized times, as well as a singular coincidence. The victim was one of eight who were hung at the same time, a poor, miseducated young man, who had sincerely repented, and died with Christian hope. "John Lancaster," says Told, "had no friend to procure him a proper interment; so that, when they had hung the usual time, and were cut down, the surgeons' mob secured his body, and carried it over to Paddington. When the mob was dispersed, a company of eight sailors, with truncheons in their hands, looked up to the gallows with an angry countenance, the bodies having been cut down some minutes previous to their arrival. An old woman who sold gin, observing them to grow violent by reason of their disappointment, mildly said, 'Gentlemen, I suppose you want the man that the surgeons have got.' 'Ay,' replied the sailors, 'where is he?' She told them that the surgeons' crew had carried him over to Paddington, and pointed out to them the road thither. They hastened away, and as they entered the town they inquired where the surgeons' mob was? On receiving the information they wanted, they went and demanded the body of John Lancaster. When they had obtained it, two of them took it on their shoulders, and carried it round by Islington. They being tired two others placed themselves under the body, and carried it from Shoreditch to Coverlet's-fields. At length, after they were all weary and unable to carry it further, they agreed to lay it on the step at the first door they came to. They did so and went their way. This gave birth to a great riot in the neighbourhood, which brought an old woman who lived in the house down-stairs. When she saw the corpse on the step of the door, she cried out, 'Lord, here is my son, John Lancaster!' This being spread abroad, the Methodists made a collection, and got him a shroud and a coffin. This event was the more singular, as the seamen had no knowledge of the body, nor to whom he belonged when living."—(The Life of Mr. Silas Told, written by himself, 5th edition, 1825, p. 65.) The state of the police, as well as of the morals of that age, are hardly conceivable to a modern citizen of London, notwithstanding the actual vice and suffering of the great metropolis.

ing her innocence. She was brought out amid the shouting scoffs of the crowd, and placed in a room, where she stood against the wall, a statue of sorrow but resignation, and with no friend but the sympathetic mariner, and the executioner, who "thanked God with tears," that the good Methodist "had come." Borne thence to Kennington Common in a cart, the populace jeered at the helpless maiden with oaths and obscenity, mistaking her religious resignation for hardness of heart. The popular fury was so great that, in order to protect Told from it, the sheriff, who rode by the side of the cart, directed him to take hold of the bridle of his horse, and walk between him and the victim. He thus accompanied her to the gallows, comforting her as they went. "My dear, look to Jesus," cried the good man. She lifted her eyes, and joyfully said, "Sir, I bless God that I can look to Jesus, to my comfort." Under the gallows he prayed with her; her conversation with him there respecting the murder, heard by the sheriff, convinced the latter of her innocence. "Good God!" exclaimed the officer, weeping, "it is another Coleman's case." But it was too late for redress. The cart was drawn from under her, and Told, standing by her to the last, had the wretched consolation of knowing that she died without a struggle, for her body dropped against his side. He published the facts which proved to him that she was guiltless.

He relates another illustration of the times, the case of a poor but virtuous man who was "*hung for a sixpence.*" With a sick wife, a little daughter, and without money, or a place to sleep in, being turned out of his house by a creditor, the friendless sufferer went down to the quay, saying, as he left his wife, "It may be the Lord will provide me with a loaf of bread or some employment." He failed, and a "sudden temptation entered his mind" to obtain relief for his perishing family by robbery. He accosted two women in Hoxton Fields and demanded money. One gave him twopence, the other fourpence. Scarcely knowing what he did, he walked before them into the city, when they related the fact to a policeman, and the starved and bewildered man was immediately thrust into prison. His wretched wife found him there, as did also the volunteer missionary. "During many years that I attended the prisoners," says the latter, "I have not seen such meek and loving spirits as appeared in the countenance and deportment of this poor man and his wife. Indeed, they were naturally inclined to few words; but the woman frequently seating herself by her husband's side, and throwing her arms round his neck, they would shed floods of tears to mitigate the anguish which overwhelmed them."

The suffering man confessed his crime, wept bitter tears of repentance, and died with more than resignation. When an appeal was made for him to the Privy Council, he was hastily confounded with a noted highwayman of the same name, and sent to the scaffold. His wife, terrified by the merciless scene, slunk away in despair. He could not, on the morning of his execution, inform Told where to find her, but the latter "spent three days in grovelling through almost every dirty alley of Bishopsgate-street," till he discovered her in a miserable room with a "poor old woman, and with no other furniture than a piece of an old rug, whereon they both laid themselves to sleep." He told her sad story to a Methodist society, after preaching, and obtained their alms for her. In the midst of her many sorrows she was about to give birth to another child. After being repelled by several persons, to whom he applied for a recommendation for her admission to a hospital, Told procured her shelter in one of those asylums. On her recovery he took her to his own home, clothed her, and, "as she was a woman of sobriety and cleanliness," obtained a "housekeeper's place" for her and a home for her child.

Let it not be said that these "simple annals of the poor," however interesting in themselves, are irrelevant to our narrative; they show the character and usefulness of Told better than could pages of eulogy; they exhibit the times better than could chapters of dissertation; they teach the grateful lesson of our obligations to that revived Christianity which, while it has banished the tumultuous vices of Moorfields, has also, to a great extent, though not yet entirely, suppressed these horrors of Newgate and the English penal laws; and if they shall tend to enforce the example of the Wesleys and their associates, in visiting those who are "sick and in prison,"—a common habit of the Methodists of that age—they may well be pondered with tears by the Methodists of ours. Silas Told continued his good work till he tottered, on his missions of mercy, under the weight of nearly seventy years, and "having done all the good in his power, he cheerfully resigned his soul into the hands of his heavenly Father, in December, 1778." *

It was befitting that Wesley himself should lay in the grave this noble fellow-labourer. On the 20th of December, 1778, he records in his Journal: "I buried what was mortal of honest Silas Told. For many years he attended the malefactors in Newgate without fee or reward, and I suppose no man, for this hundred years, has been so successful in that melancholy office. God had

* Arminian Magazine, 1788, p. 406.

given him peculiar talents for it, and he had amazing success therein. The greatest part of those whom he attended died in peace, and many of them in the triumph of faith." *

While some of the most notable of Wesley's coadjutors were thus falling in their work, more were rising to take their places. To them let us now turn.

* Wesley's Works, vol. iv. I congratulate myself on the opportunity of reviving the memory of Silas Told, a man of such exemplary usefulness, but whose name has nearly been forgotten in the later and stirring events of Methodism. Wesley published, with a preface, his autobiography: "The Life of Silas Told: Written by Himself," (18mo, pp. 113. London: 1790;) a book which, with some editing, might do much good in our times, and which could not fail to be "popular." Southey (Life of Wesley, chap. 29) refers to Told, with no other good word than an acknowledgment of his "honest zeal." He takes occasion, at the same time, to say that "the Wesleys do not appear to have repeated their visits after their early exclusion from the prisons, and that the early Methodists generally abandoned such good works." The intimation is utterly false; the Methodist writings of the times abound in records of such labours: the Conference of 1778, some months before the death of Told, formally recognized it as a duty of the preachers to visit the prisons; Wesley preached at Newgate when above eighty years old, while nearly half a hundred men under sentence of death (such was the hanging of that day!) wept around him; Charles Wesley visited Newgate and other prisons, and his last publication was a pamphlet of poetical "Prayers for Condemned Malefactors," which he said had been answered "on nineteen malefactors, who all died penitent" at one time.

CHAPTER V.

CONFERENCES FROM 1770 TO 1780.

Change in the Character of the "Minutes"—Conference of 1771—Francis Asbury—Sketch of Benson, the Commentator—The Session of 1772—Statistics—Session of 1773—America—Session of 1774—Further News from America—Sketch of Samuel Bradburn, the Methodist Demosthenes—Characteristic Incident—James Rogers—His early Piety—He receives Encouragement from a reclaimed Vagrant—Is converted—Goes about "exhorting"—Preaches to his Family—Encounters a mob—Joins the Conference—Conference of 1775—Examination of Preachers' Characters—Duncan M'Allum—John Valton—Conference of 1776—Session of 1777—Conference Obituaries begun—Condition of the Societies—John Hilton turns Quaker—Fletcher—A Session in Ireland—Rev. Edward Smyth—Separation from the Church opposed—Conference of 1778—Missions—Dr. Coke—He is "chimed" out of his Church—Is threatened by a mob—Joins Wesley—His Character—He becomes the first Protestant Bishop of the New World—Conference of 1779—Scotland—Sketch of Henry Moore—He is mobbed in Dublin—Conference of 1780—Results of this Decade.

Down to the Conference of 1770 we have been able to observe, in the Annual Minutes, the gradual development of the Theology and Economy of Arminian Methodism. The controversy occasioned by the anti-Calvinistic Minute of that session, seems to have rendered Wesley cautious of such necessarily brief and unqualified statements of doctrinal opinions. Excepting the conciliatory measures of the next session, respecting the obnoxious Minute, we find thenceforward scarcely an allusion to polemical questions in any of the proceedings down to his death. The Minutes became records of routine business, of statistics, finances, and "appointments"—dry outlines, which would hardly be readable could they not be relieved by personal and characteristic facts connected with their rolls of names. Happily such facts are superabundant, and not only entertaining and even romantic, in many instances, but in the truest sense historical, as revealing the spirit of the Methodistic movement and of the times. It is probable that Wesley had already begun to think of a more convenient mode of discussing his doctrines in the periodical which he commenced before the

expiration of this decade—the noted Arminian Magazine; or it may be that he deemed the theology of the Connection sufficiently defined in the discussions of past Conferences, in his own numerous writings, and in the controversial works of Fletcher.

The subject of chief interest at the twenty-eighth session, begun at Bristol, August 6, 1771, has already been amply reviewed in the account of the Calvinistic controversy.

There were received on probation at this Conference 8 preachers; 3 were continued on trial, and 15 were received into full membership; 126, including the Wesleys, were enrolled in the appointments.

Forty-eight circuits are recorded, a decrease of two, occasioned by the combination of those of Essex and Norfolk, and of Cheshire North and Cheshire South. The three circuits of Scotland, reported in 1770, were reduced to two. A new circuit named Macclesfield was organized. Many of the old circuits were also greatly extended.

The number of members reported was 31,338,* the increase for the year was 1934.

The collections for Kingswood School amounted to £230, for chapel debts to £1,665, and £63 were added to the Preachers' Fund. A contribution of one penny a-week for one year from each member was ordered to be taken throughout the Connection for the liquidation of the debts, and to supply contingencies; and the richer members were called upon to supply the deficiencies of the poor.

"Our brethren in America call aloud for help," said Wesley to the Conference; "who are willing to go over and help them?" Five responded and two were sent, Francis Asbury and Richard Wright. The first was destined to become the chief hero of American Methodism, and one of the chief characters in American ecclesiastical history.

A name afterwards eminently distinguished in the annals of Methodism, appeared this year, for the first time, on the roll of the Conference—that of Joseph Benson. He was born in Cumberland in 1748. His childhood was marked by seriousness, intelligence, and diligence in study, and he early acquired a knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages, and of Theology. While under ten years of age he formed the habit of secret prayer. He dates his regeneration in his sixteenth year. He had then become acquainted with Wesley's itinerants, who visited his native town; he believed that Methodism opened for him a career of great, and therefore of

* "The Minutes of the Wesleyan Conferences," vol. i. p. 99.

ennobling self-sacrifice, and resolved, the next year, to go to Newcastle, consult Wesley, whom he had not yet seen, and throw himself out upon such opportunities of usefulness as the great evangelist could afford him. His aged father accompanied him part of the way on foot; they separated on the highway "with a flood of tears," and never met again.* He did not find Wesley at Newcastle, but set out on foot, in mid-winter, to meet him in London. A generous man, hearing his design on the route, paid his coach fare to the city. Wesley took him to Kingswood, and appointed him classical master of its seminary. He remained in this office till, by Fletcher's influence, he was made head master at Trevecca College. We have noticed his labours and trials there, and his dismissal by the Countess of Huntingdon at the breaking out of the Calvinistic controversy. While at Kingswood he had entered his name at St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, and regularly "kept his terms," and at his dismissal from Trevecca he went to the University to complete his studies. Oxford had become noted for not only its hostile treatment of the original Methodists, but for its expulsion of the Methodist students of St. Edmund's Hall, in 1768, and Benson's relations with Wesley and Lady Huntingdon were now alleged against him at the University. His tutor declined to sign his testimonals for orders in the Church, and on obtaining them from other and high sources, the Bishop of Worcester refused him ordination, and thus did the Establishment, in its relentless hostility to Methodism, cast away another of its sons, who might have become one of its chief ornaments in that age. This treatment occasioned him much perplexity and depression; but he immediately went forth preaching in Wiltshire with great success. "The Lord," he writes, "scattered my doubts, and showed me more clearly the way of salvation by faith in Christ. I was not now anxious to know how I had resolved, or not resolved. I had the Lord with me in all things; my soul rejoiced in his love, and I was continually expecting him to fulfil in me all his good pleasure."

At the Conference of 1771 he was appointed to the London circuit, and thenceforward, for half a century, occupied the most important posts of English Methodism. He was twice President of the Conference, and from 1803 till his death, February 16th, 1821, was editor of the Methodist Magazine. His Biblical Commentary became the general study of Wesleyan preachers,† and, with his

* Treffry's Memoirs of Rev. Joseph Benson, chap. 1.

† Horne (in his Introduction to the Critical Study of the Holy Scriptures) speaks highly of his Commentary. It was largely a compilation from Poole's

sermons and numerous other writings, has contributed incalculably to that stability of theology and growth of intelligence which have characterized the Connection. He was noted for his accurate and profound acquaintance with the Greek New Testament, the soundness and breadth of his theological knowledge, his quiet dignity, the wisdom of his counsels, and the eloquence, at once thoughtful and fervid, of his preaching. Disposed to expository and grave discourse, a Demosthenic eloquence nevertheless often marked his perorations and shook his audiences as the storm shakes the forest.

At Leeds, on the 4th of August, 1772, began the twenty-ninth Conference: 4 candidates were admitted into membership and 11 were received on trial; 132 received appointments; 2 ceased to travel; the number of circuits was still 48. The returns of members amounted to 31,984, showing a gain of 646. The original centres of Methodism still maintained their numerical prominence. London reported 2,441 members; Bristol, 1,249; Cornwall, 2,453; Leeds and Birstal, (the scenes of John Nelson's early labours,) 2,981; Haworth, (the parish of Grimshaw,) 1,219; the Dales, 1,003; Newcastle, 1,747. All Scotland reported but 703.

The collections for the "Connectional" funds amounted to £3,388.

The next session was held in London, August 3, 1773: 10 candidates were admitted to membership; 12 were received on trial; 4 members retired; 135 received appointments; the circuits were 48. The number of members was 33,274, and the increase for the year 1,290.

The collections for the Conference funds amounted to £2,549.

The plan presented by Wesley to the Conference of 1769, for the perpetuation of the lay ministry, in the event of his death,* was again discussed, and received the signatures of forty-nine members, many having signed it in 1769.

Thomas Rankin and George Shadford had been sent, before the session, to America, where Methodism was rapidly extending; its first native American preacher, William Watters, had been called out in the preceding year, and its first Conference was held about a month before the present English session.

Annotations. Poole extended his notes only to Isaiah, fifty-eighth chapter; his work was continued by other hands. With the exception of Genesis, Benson has mostly copied Poole as far as the latter went. Methodist writers were in the habit of abridging good authors for the use of their people. Benson acknowledged his indebtedness to Poole and other writers, but not with sufficient particularity to save him from malicious criticism.

* See Book iv. ch. 6.

On the 9th of August, 1774, the thirty-first Conference assembled in Bristol: 5 candidates were admitted to membership; 15 were received on probation; 4 members retired, among whom was Joseph Pilmoor,* one of the first missionaries sent to America; 143 received appointments. The circuits had increased to 50, by the addition of Thirsk and Dundee. The members were reported at 35,672, showing an increase of 2,398.

The contributions to the Conference funds amounted to £895.

The signatures to the paper providing for the continuance of the ministry after the death of Wesley were increased to seventy-two.

Cheering news had arrived from America; its second annual Conference had been held in Philadelphia, (May 25,) and 7 preachers had been admitted on trial, and 5 into membership; a church had been erected in Baltimore, the Light-street chapel, renowned in the annals of American Methodism; 17 preachers were now in the field, and 14 circuits were formed, with 2,073 members, an increase of 913, nearly double the number of the preceding year.† Three preachers were dispatched to the farther South, whither Robert Williams had penetrated since the preceding Conference, and where he had been instrumental in the conversion of five or six hundred souls, and the formation of five or six circuits.

Among the names of probationers received by Wesley at this Conference, are those of James Rogers and Samuel Bradburn, both eminent men in the itinerant ministry for the remainder of their lives.

During forty years Samuel Bradburn was esteemed the "Demosthenes of Methodism." He was born at Gibraltar,‡ October 5, 1751, where his father's regiment was stationed, and spent there the first twelve years of his life. His family afterwards settled at Chester, where he learned the business of a shoemaker, and where Methodism reached him while yet a youth, and sent him forth on his long and distinguished career. He laboured successfully as a local preacher during 1773, and, entering the itinerant ranks the present year, immediately commanded public attention by his extraordinary elo-

* [His name appears again on the Minutes from 1776 to 1785, when he altogether withdrew from the Ministry.—E. E.]

† Bang's Hist. of the M. E. Church, vol. i. book ii. ch. 1.

‡ Dr. Stevens, on the authority of the "Wesleyan Centenary Takings," says he was born at sea, in the Bay of Biscay. The minutes of Conference, and Smith, in his "History," say the Bay of Gibraltar. Bradburn, in his "Autobiography," says at Gibraltar; in accordance with which statement, I have corrected the narrative.—E. E.

quence.* His person was large and noble; he was attentive to his appearance, powdering his wig, and carrying Wesley's views of ministerial gentility rather too far. He was excessively given to humour, and for nearly half a century shared with Rowland Hill and Matthew Wilks, the imputation of nearly all the anecdotes of clerical eccentricity current in England. His peculiarities sometimes verged on insanity, and the records of the time allude obscurely to a period when a cloud enveloped him; but when his brethren recorded his death in their annual Minutes, they could say that "his ministry was owned of God for the salvation of many, and for several years he was considered not only as one of the first preachers of the land, for all the higher powers of persuasive eloquence, but as a faithful labourer in the vineyard of the Lord."

His discourses are described as rich in sublimity, in mighty, grasping thoughts, and yet as presenting, in the strongest contrasts, an exhaustless wit. Dr. Adam Clarke, who knew him well, being asked for a description of his eloquence, replied: "I have never heard his equal; I can furnish you with no adequate idea of his powers as an orator; we have not a man among us that will support anything like a comparison with him. Another Bradburn must be created, and you must hear him for yourself, before you can receive a satisfactory answer to your inquiry."†

One of his hearers, himself distinguished as a popular orator, said, on leaving the chapel, "We may apply to him, in an accommodated sense, what was said of our Lord, 'Never man spake like this man.'" His humour was usually genial, but could be satirical, and croakers and pretenders dreaded his repartees. He especially rebuked any lack of fidelity or heroism in Methodist preachers, whom he considered to be too much honoured by their office to admit of complaints of suffering or self-sacrifice. Some of the young members of the Conference, in relating their ministerial experience, spoke too much, as he thought, about their having given up *all* for the ministry. As most of them had risen from occupations as humble as his own,

* [Some general rules to be observed in preaching, which he drew up in 1779, are well worth notice. They are printed in his "Memoir by his Daughter," 1816. They are marked by sound sense, and have here and there glimpses of his peculiar humour. "In every point of your pulpit engagement," he says, "be neither an *air-balloon* nor a *steam-engine;* but be as the moon walking in brightness." He recommends short sermons. "How seldom," he says, "do any people complain of the shortness of a sermon—how often of its being too long? What a fool, then, is he who spends his time and strength merely to be blamed!"—E. E.]

† Wakeley's "Heroes of Methodism," p. 270. New York, 1857.

he sprung up and responded, "Yes, dear brethren, some of you have had to sacrifice your all for the itinerancy; but we old men have had our share of these trials. As for myself, I made a double sacrifice, for I gave up for the ministry two of the best *awls* in the kingdom—a great sacrifice truly to become an ambassador of God in the Church and a gentleman in society!"

He shared the hostile encounters of his brethren with the mobs, and, it must be added, with the clergy of that day; but his adroit humour gave him peculiar advantages on such occasions. Methodism had been successfully repelled from a town on his circuit by rioters, under the direction of the parish clergyman, who was also a magistrate. Bradburn determined to secure the ground, and, being unknown in the town, sent a request to a few obscure Methodists who remained there, to announce that an out-door sermon would be delivered by a stranger at three o'clock on a given Sunday. The clergyman prepared his agents to arrest the preacher and disperse the assembly. Bradburn arrived at the place in time to attend the morning service at the parish church, where his commanding and well-dressed person attracted respectful attention. He accosted the clergyman after the benediction, and thanked him for his discourse in so polite a manner as to win his immediate favour and an invitation to dinner. He was supposed to be a brother clergyman, and without doubt an important one, for his rare powers of conversation proved him to be no ordinary man. On rising from the table he intimated a curiosity to hear the Methodist sermon in the open air. The clergyman expressed himself happy to accompany him, for he intended, he remarked, to arrest the vagrant preacher, and put a stop to such scenes. Bradburn induced him to give up his purpose, and proposed that they should allow the itinerant a candid hearing. They walked to the place and found a large assembly, but no preacher. After waiting some time, the clergyman was about to dismiss the crowd, as he supposed the preacher had taken warning and would not appear; but Bradburn suggested that it would be best not to disappoint the people, that it was a favourable opportunity of doing them good, and began to urge the clergyman to mount a large stone, on which the itinerant was to have stood, and "hold forth" to them himself, for certainly Christ or St. Paul would have done so. This home-directed and unexpected appeal took the parish priest by surprise; he could not well evade it; but, apologizing that he had no sermon in his pocket, he retorted it on his supposed brother clergyman. Bradburn gladly accepted the challenge, and, waiting not for further reasoning, stepped up on the stone, and began the service

by singing the first hymn of the Methodist collection, and, after praying, preached from the text, "Now, I say unto you, refrain from these men and let them alone, for if this counsel or this work be of men it will come to naught; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found to fight against God." The eloquent discourse, it is said, not only affected the people, but delighted their minister so much that he heartily thanked Bradburn for the well-managed deception, and to the day of his death entertained the Methodist preachers at his house.*

There was a genuine pathos mixed with the sublimity and humour of this great man. He could weep with them who wept, and his incessant repartees were often accompanied with heart-touching tenderness. Samuel Bardsley, himself noted for eccentricity as well as piety, and, like Bradburn, of a gigantic size, was the "spiritual father" of the latter. Bradburn was once indulging his irrepressible humour somewhat to the disadvantage of his beloved friend, who checked him. "Recollect," said Bardsley, "that though you have many brethren, you have but one father in the Gospel." Bradburn leaped from his seat, threw himself on the neck of his old friend, and with gushing tears and the affectionate fondness of a child, replied, "The Lord knows that I love you in the Gospel next to my Saviour."

Such are a few of the reminiscences of Samuel Bradburn which are still floating about the Methodist world: time and the failure of records have left us little else of interest respecting him, but such incidents illustrate the man better than could the best portraitures of his character. His name is still a Methodist household word in England. He was as useful as eloquent, and his brethren proved their respect for him by electing him president of the Conference a few years after the death of Wesley.†

James Rogers is well known to Methodist readers by his autobiography,‡ but still more by the memoirs of his devoted wife, Hester Ann Rogers, who shared for many years his usefulness as

* This story, which, with almost any other man than Bradburn, seems too good to be true, is related by Wakeley (Heroes of Methodism, p. 277), on the authority of George Brereton, a Wesleyan preacher.

† A volume of Bradburn's "Sermons, preached on Particular Occasions," was issued in London, 1817. They show no little vigour of thought and style; but his eloquence, like that of Whitefield, could not be printed. A memoir of him, consisting mainly of his autobiography and extracts from his journals, was published by his daughter, but it was so imperfect as to prove unacceptable to his friends. No possible memoir could meet their expectations: such men cannot be reduced to type.

‡ In Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, vol. ii.

well as his itinerant trials, and whose saintly example has had an influence on the piety of Methodist women throughout the Connection. He was a Yorkshireman, and, like most of the preachers given by that county to Methodism, was mighty in word and work.

His inquiring mind was subject to deep religious impressions as early as his third year. The conversations of his humble neighbours on religious topics, at his father's fireside, kept him out of bed till late hours, "through his desire to hear what might be said upon such subjects." He formed a plan of religious life, saying faithfully his prayers, abstaining from recreations on the Sabbath, telling no falsehoods, quarrelling with no school-fellows, and attending punctually the parish church. But these virtues afforded no rest to his mind. His father dying in his eleventh year, he was placed among strangers, when a singular incident brought to him a knowledge of Methodism. One of his companions, "a wild young man," ran away from his parents to seek adventures on the seas; on arriving at Northampton he got into the company of a few Methodists, was reclaimed, joined their society, and soon after returned to his father's house, thoroughly zealous for the introduction of Methodism among his friends. "His old acquaintances," says Rogers, "flocked to see him upon his arrival, and expected feasting, merriment, and, as they call it, great doings. But the tables were now turned. He began to exhort us all to 'flee from the wrath to come,' enforcing the necessity of repentance and the new birth, stating that old things must be done away, and all things become new; and he observed that, instead of gluttony, drinking, singing, and dancing, we ought rather to fall upon our knees, and give God thanks for all his benefits. They gaped and stared at him as a monster; and some of them came near him no more, swearing he was turned Methodist, that his brain was hurt, and that if they did not keep from him he would convert them all, and make them as mad as himself."

Such incidents were of frequent occurrence in the early progress of Methodism, but this one took the villagers by surprise. Young Rogers, who had been secretly praying among them for light, made known his anxieties to the reclaimed youth, who "rejoiced over him as one who had found great spoil." "From that time," he adds, "I date my acquaintance with the people of God, and to this day I have preferred them to all others."

The nearest Methodist society was eight miles distant; the itinerants preached there once a fortnight, on Tuesday nights; the road to it was difficult, and extended over mountains, but Rogers wended his way thither faithfully, winter and summer. He

remained, nevertheless, without a "sense of the forgiveness of his sins till he removed to Whitby, where he could take no rest day or night" till he sent for the class-leader of that town, who, kneeling in prayer on the floor, wrote him a note admitting him to the society. Among these earnest Christians he soon "entered into rest." After more than thirty years of labours and sufferings he says of the hour of his deliverance: "While I now recollect it, my overflowing heart and eyes almost forbid my proceeding. In that moment my burden was gone; my heart was brought out of bondage into glorious liberty, and the love which I felt for God and all mankind was inexpressibly great. I was constrained to cry with David, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.'"

It was not long before he was diligently at work, exhorting and praying with his neighbours. He set off to visit his kindred, who were now at a considerable distance. They assembled at one of their homes to hear him, and standing up in their midst in his father's house, he faithfully warned them to flee from the wrath to come. All seemed astonished, and some were much affected. In fine, like John Nelson on a similar occasion, he had become a preacher. At a second meeting among his relatives, such was the effect of his exhortation that the house was filled with groans and cries, and his sister-in-law professed to receive the pardon of her sins upon the spot. He went forth among the villages around Whitby, and "stood in the open streets to warn sinners." He formed the first Methodist society in Lythe, "a wicked place," and obtained for it the services of a travelling preacher once a month.

Few of the Methodist preachers of that day had escaped the persecutions of mobs, and the continual and fiery fight of affliction which they thus endured would be incredible in our times, were it not attested by facts so numerous that their frequent occurrence risks the interest of the reader, however exciting they may be. If they were not a necessary, they were at least a salutary part of the discipline of the itinerant ministry. This zealous Yorkshireman had a thorough initiatory experience of them. His success at Lythe roused the rabble, who collected at the door of one of his meetings to attack him and his brethren. Their number was great, and he had no sooner dismissed the assembly than the assault was begun. Hearing the noise, he pushed forward from the pulpit, and got into the midst of them. They saluted him with volleys of oaths and showers of stones and dirt, and in less than two

minutes fell to blows. One of the stoutest of them advanced, with eyes gleaming with fury, and made several strokes at his head, but he received them upon his left arm, which was much bruised. When the assailant could not bring him to the ground, he was enraged; and watching his opportunity, while Rogers was endeavouring to rescue one of his friends whom they were beating, the ruffian came behind him, and gave him such a blow on his right temple that he staggered like a drunken man. His hat fell off, and his senses were confused, so that he must have fallen had the blow been repeated. This, doubtless, would have been done, but in that moment a pious young girl, who had lately joined the society, thinking he was much hurt, took up a stone and defended him. The assailant left the preacher to revenge himself upon the child; he seized a stone, two pounds in weight, and threw it with such violence at her face that she fell to the ground and lay motionless. She was supposed to be dead, and was carried home to her mother's house; and though she recovered, she was severely cut, having her cheek laid open to the bone, and "bore this mark of suffering for her Lord's sake to her dying hour." Others of the society were hurt. One, in particular, had his face almost covered with blood; and his coat, waistcoat, and shirt torn half way down his back. "It is probable," adds Rogers, "that we might have come worse off still, had not God taken our part; for 'as the stars in their courses fought against Sisera,' so the Lord struck our enemies with terror, by sending, in that very moment, dreadful flashes of lightning from a cloud, which seemed to burst over their guilty heads. Finding an opportunity, while they were terrified, we endeavoured to escape, but retreated gradually, as some of our people were old and infirm, and we were not willing to leave them in the rear, lest they should become a prey." The next day he found means to bring some of the ringleaders to justice, and they disturbed him no more.

He kept his ground among these poor people for about two years, and then set out on foot, in the depth of winter, for a journey of a hundred miles in circumference, preaching wherever he found an opportunity. Wesley could not lose such a man, and at the present session, James Rogers took his place in the Conference, and thenceforward laboured, in all parts of the United Kingdom, one of the most heroic of Methodist itinerants. We have seen him receiving an extempore sacrament from the hands of Fletcher, at the house of Ireland, near Bristol. He had great success in Ireland and Scotland. He travelled with Wesley in his last journey, and

stood by the bedside of the dying patriarch. He possessed a vigorous understanding, a quenchless zeal, eminent holiness of heart and life, and died in triumph after more than thirty-three years of ministerial toils and sufferings.

The Conference of 1775 began at Leeds, August 1st: 10 candidates were admitted to probation, and 20 probationers to membership; 2 members desisted from travelling. Scarborough was added to the list of circuits, which now numbered 51; 153 labourers were appointed; 38,145 members were reported, and the increase for the year was 2,473. The signatures to Wesley's plan for the union and perpetuation of the ministry were increased to eighty-one.

The collections for Kingswood, the chapel debts, and the Preachers' fund, amounted to £958.

The prohibition of the erection of new chapels was now modified; they could be built wherever the Conference gave express permission, and authority for the purpose was given to Oldham, Taunton, and Halifax. To encourage the payment of church debts, the circuits were allowed to retain their Chapel Fund collections, except one-fifth, which was to be returned, as usual, to the Conference. Classes exceeding thirty members were to be divided. At all the Conferences inquiry was made respecting the character and qualifications of each preacher, and his ministerial conduct, but at the present session Wesley made this examination with unusual particularity. He had received letters reporting unfavourably of the talents and piety of some of his labourers; he read them in the Conference, and requested a free but brotherly expression of opinion concerning any one against whom objections could be alleged. Committees were also appointed to examine two or three difficult cases. The result was, he records, that "we were all fully convinced that the charge advanced was without foundation; that God has really sent those labourers into his vineyard, and has qualified them for his work; and we were all more closely united together than we have been for many years."*

We have a single theological sentence in the Minutes of this session—an allusion to the Calvinistic controversy which was still rife: "We all deny that there is or can be *any merit*, properly speaking, *in man*."

Duncan M'Allum's name appears, for the first time, in the appointments of this Conference. His early education had been neglected, but on coming under the influence of Methodism, not only his heart but his intellect seemed to be renewed. Quick in

* Journal, August 1, 1775.

his perceptions, and of retentive memory and indefatigable industry, he became an able scholar in the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac languages, as also in most branches of mental and physical science. He was of great service to Methodism in Scotland, his native country, where he combined with his studious habits the incessant labours which were common to the Methodist ministry of the last century, preaching often four times on the Sabbath, twice in English and twice in Gaelic. It is recorded that "few have had more seals to their ministry in that country;" that perhaps no Wesleyan minister in Scotland was ever better known, more generally esteemed, or more useful; and that among his sincerest admirers were many of the clergy of the Scotch Church and professors of the Scotch universities.* He laboured in the Methodist ranks far into our own century, having kept the field for nearly sixty years.†

John Valton‡ was one of M'Allum's fellow-candidates at the session of 1775, and a man of mark in the ministry for nearly twenty years. His character and usefulness, it is said, made him one of the finest examples of Christian life among the early Methodists. He was born of Romish parents, and strictly trained in their faith. In his childhood he was sent to France, where an abbot had charge of his education, and, decorated with ecclesiastical vestments, he took part in the services of the altar. On returning to England he broke away from his papal errors; and, by reading one of Hervey's works, acquired some knowledge of the Methodistic views of true religion; they deeply impressed him, but were banished from his mind during several years which he spent abroad in the army. While employed as a clerk under the Board of Ordnance, at Purfleet in Essex, the Methodist influence reached him again, and more directly, and he became a new man. He joined the Wesleyan society there, and was licensed as a local preacher. Wesley, as was his custom, urged him to give up his office and throw himself upon the "itinerant work," but he hesitated about six years. His health meanwhile declined, and one of his friends wrote to him, "I do not know but God has spoken the word, *Preach or die!*" He was induced the present year to enter the

* Minutes of Wesleyan Conferences, vol. vii. p. 347.

† I regret my data will not enable me to give his useful life a more adequate record. He died July 21, 1834, aged seventy-nine years. "I have no extraordinary triumph," he said, among his last remarks; "but all is peace." The reader should not confound him with his son, Dr. Daniel M'Allum, who entered the itinerancy in 1817, and died seven years before his father.

‡ Wrongly spelled Walton in the Minutes of 1775.

travelling ministry, and till the day of his death was a faithful labourer, eminently zealous and successful. Many of the old circuits still treasure precious reminiscences of him. He was a mighty evangelist—a "revivalist," spreading a powerful sensation in his course. He was the chief instrument of a memorable revival in John Nelson's Birstal circuit, and it is recorded that under one of his sermons in the West of England, no less than a hundred persons were awakened. When he resigned his situation the government gave him an annual pension of about £40, and as he remained unmarried, he never accepted any other aid than his food from his circuits, and gave his income, beyond his own economical wants, to the needy.* "His praise," said his brethren when they recorded his death, "is in all the churches. He was a pattern of holiness, of charity, and of zeal for the glory of God. His ministry was plain, convincing, and powerful."†

On the 6th of August, 1776, the thirty-third Conference assembled in London: 13 candidates were received on probation, and 7 probationers admitted to membership; 5 ceased to travel; there were 157 on the roll, including the Wesleys, but excluding, for the first time, those who were in America. The number of circuits was 55; there was an actual gain of five for the year, but the omission of America rendered the apparent increase but four. The names of Lynn, Leicester, Nottingham, Grimsby, Gainsborough, Epworth, and Colne, appear on the Minutes for the first time.

The total membership was reported at 39,826, the American returns being stated at their number for the former year, as, owing to the war, no report had reached the Conference from this side of the Atlantic. The increase for the year was 1681. The collections for the Conference funds amounted to £1049.

Wesley again instituted a rigorous inquiry respecting the ability and characters of the preachers. The result was, that one was excluded for incapacity, "two for misbehaviour; and we were," he writes, "thoroughly satisfied that all the rest had both grace and gifts for the work wherein they are engaged."

The preachers were recommended to study Wesley's, Fletcher's, and Sellon's works on the Calvinistic controversy, and to preach zealously "universal redemption."‡

* Life and Labours of the late Rev. John Valton, written by himself, and edited by Joseph Sutcliffe, A.M.

† He died, "rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God, in 1794."—Wesleyan Minutes, vol. i. p. 296. new edition, 1862.

‡ [On Calvinism the "Minutes" of this year express this very decided opinion, "It has been the grand hindrance of the work of God." Some very

The thirty-fourth Conference met in Bristol, August 5, 1777. There was an addition of 9 probationers and of 4 members; 4 retired from the itinerancy; 154 took appointments, exclusive of those who were in America; 3 new circuits, Somerset, Alnwick, and Ballyshannon, were added, making the whole number 58. The aggregate membership was 38,274; an apparent loss of 1552, but a real gain of 1596, as the American returns of 3148 last year, were now omitted. The usual Chapel Fund collection had been intermitted this year, in order that the societies might generally aid in the erection of City Road Chapel, London. The two contributions to Kingswood School and the Preachers' Fund amounted to £464.*

In the minutes of this session appear, for the first time, those obituary notices of preachers, which have ever since been an important part of such documents in all Methodist Conferences. They are recorded with Wesley's characteristic brevity. It was asked, "What preachers have died this year?" and answered: "John Slocomb, at Clones, an old labourer, worn out in the service; John Harrison, near Lisburn, a promising youth, serious, modest, and much devoted to God; William Lumley, in Hexham, a blessed young man, a happy witness of the full liberty of the children of God; and William Minethorp, near Dunbar, an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile." Wesley seldom departed from this laconic style in his Conference obituaries, not even when recording the death of his most eminent co-labourers, as his brother and Fletcher.†

He says in his Journal, that captious complaints were circulated respecting the condition of the Connexion. It was affirmed that it had lost its spiritual life and simplicity. At the present Conference he particularly inquired of every Assistant, "Have you reason to believe, from your own observation, that the Methodists are a fallen people? Is there a decay or an increase in the work of God where you have been? Are the societies in general more dead or more alive to God than they were some years ago?" The almost universal answer was: "If we must *know them by their fruits*, there is no decay in the work of God among the people in general. The societies are not dead to God: they are as much alive as they

unpleasant feeling on this subject had been excited, and the preachers are urged to preach against Calvinism in love and gentleness, and not to imitate the Calvinists in "screaming, allegorizing, calling themselves ordained, boasting of their learning, college, or 'my lady.'"—Minutes, vol. i. p. 126.—E. E.]

* [This year John Atlay was appointed the first Book Steward.]

† [Fletcher's death was thus recorded in 1786, "a pattern of holiness, scarce to be paralleled in a century."—Minutes, vol. i. p. 183.]

have been for many years; and we look on this report as a mere device of Satan, to make our hands hang down."*

One honest but weak-headed man, John Hilton, who had been preaching for thirteen years, differed from his brethren on the question, and insisted upon leaving them as "a fallen people." His old associates endeavoured to give him more charitable and hopeful views; but Wesley, better discerning his character, said, "Let him go in peace." He soon after found relief to his troubled mind by donning a broad-brimmed hat and joining the Quakers.

The Conference "concluded," says Wesley, "as it begun, in much love." It seems to have been pervaded by a special religious influence. John Pritchard, who had come over from hard trials in Ireland to attend it, records that he "experienced during the session much self-abasement, being conscious of his unworthiness" of a place among such men, for "every one appeared as a bright light compared with himself." Fletcher was with them, and doubtless his presence contributed much to the spiritual interest of the occasion; for the radiance of heaven seemed to circle and glow about this rare man wherever he went. No one, except Wesley himself, was more revered, or possessed a more decided influence among the itinerants. His word, always bland, and fervent with piety, solved what seemed to be impracticable difficulties in their proceedings; they wept like children as he spoke; and when disputes ran high, as was sometimes though not often the case, he would throw himself upon his knees among them and call upon God for counsel, they bowing and sobbing around him. Any difficulty could thus be overcome with men of their sincerity and unselfishness.

We have seen Fletcher seeking health at Stoke Newington; he continued there fifteen weeks; but not improving, he had been conducted by his friend Ireland to Bristol, where he had the present opportunity of meeting Wesley and his preachers. Benson, his fellow-sufferer in the troubles at Trevecca, says: "We have had an edifying conference. Mr. Fletcher's visit to-day and yesterday has been attended with a blessing. His appearance, his exhortations, and his prayers, broke most of our hearts, and filled us with shame and self-abasement for our little improvement."† Fletcher happened to be passing by the door of a stable belonging to the chapel in Broadmead, where Benson was alighting from his horse: "I

* [At this conference the inquiry into the ability and characters of the preachers was again made a special matter, and several names silently disappear from the "minutes" of this year.—E. E.]

† Macdonald's Life of Benson, p. 62.

shall never forget," writes the latter "with what a heavenly air and sweet countenance he instantly came up to me in the stable, and, in the most solemn manner, putting his hands upon my head, as if he had been ordaining me for the sacred office of the ministry, prayed most fervently for and blessed me in the name of the Lord. To act in this way, indeed, toward his friends, was no uncommon thing with him; he was wont to do so frequently; and that in a manner so serious and devout, that it was almost impossible not to be deeply affected with it."* Fletcher had prostrated his health by the prolonged Calvinistic controversy; he remained some months, after the adjournment of the Conference, under the hospitable roof of Ireland. He walked on the margin of the heavenly land, and its pure light and fragrant air seemed to flow out upon his pathway continually. We search in vain, through the records of saintly lives, for a human example of a more divine life, a more blessed walk with God in the pilgrimage of our suffering mortality, than he presented in these years of daily sickness. Spitting blood, and no longer able to preach, he ministered spiritual counsels to his friends and his parish in continual letters. It was about the time of this Conference that the affecting scene of the impromptu sacrament with Rogers and his fellow itinerants occurred. "This world," he writes to a friend, "has become to me a *world of love*." To another he says: "Death has lost its sting, and I thank God I know not what hurry of spirit is, or unbelieving fears, under my most terrifying symptoms." To a daughter of Perronet he writes: "The Lord does not suffer the enemy to disturb my peace. He gives me, in prospect, the victory over death." To Perronet himself, his old and dear friend, he says: "Let us abound, then, in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost; so shall we antedate the millennium, take the kingdom, and enjoy beforehand the rest which remains for the people of God. Your great age, and my great weakness, have brought us to the verge of eternity. O may we exult in the prospect, and look on that boundless sea through the glass of faith, and through the clefts of the Rock of ages, struck for us; through the vail of Christ's flesh, who, by dying for our sins and rising again for our justification, is become our resurrection and our life. I thank God I am a little stronger than when I came hither. I remember with grateful joy the happy days I spent at Shoreham: *Tecum vivere amem; tecum obeam lubens;* 'I could love to live with you; with you I would willingly die.' But, what is better still, I shall live with the Lord and with you for ever and ever."

* Benson's Life of Fletcher, chap. 7.

Accompanied by Ireland and his daughter, Fletcher retired to his native home at Nyon, Switzerland, where he remained nearly four years, seeking health amid its picturesque scenery, and exemplifying and occasionally preaching the Gospel to the children of his former neighbours. We shall meet him again in Wesley's Conferences, and find him still nearer heaven.

Before the next regular session, an informal one was held in Ireland, July 7th, 1778, at which about twenty preachers were present. It appears to have been called for the purpose of allaying an excitement against the national Church, which had broken out among the Irish Methodists from their long maltreatment by the Establishment, and from the influence of Rev. Edward Smyth, who had been driven from it in the north of Ireland for his Methodistic preaching. He had joined the Methodist ministry,* and with honest but indiscreet zeal laboured to persuade Wesley and his Irish preachers to separate from the Establishment.† Wesley had long before settled this question, but he allowed it to be fully canvassed in the Irish Conference. "Is it not our duty," it was asked, "to separate from the Church, considering the wickedness both of the clergy and the people?" "We conceive not," was the answer; "1. Because both the priests and the people were full as wicked in the Jewish Church, and yet God never commanded the holy Israelites to separate from them; 2. Neither did our Lord command his disciples to separate from them; he rather commanded the contrary. 3. Hence it is clear *that* could not be the meaning of St. Paul's words: '*Come out from among them, and be ye separate.*'"

Wesley considered such questions as only a diversion from the appropriate work of Methodism, and he reminded the Conference of its high calling by the additional question, "Have we a right view of our work?" It was answered: "Perhaps not. It is not to take care of this or that society, or to preach so many times; but to save as many souls as we can; to bring as many sinners as we can to repentance, and with all our power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord."

The thirty-fifth regular session commenced on the 4th of August, 1778, at Leeds: 12 candidates were received on probation, and 13 probationers were admitted to membership; 5 ceased to travel;

* [Smyth's name never appeared on the Minutes, nor does he seem even to have had an appointment from the Conference. Myles in his chronological list gives 1777 as the period of his entering the Methodist ministry, and 1784 as the date of his withdrawful.—E. E.]

† Myles's Chron. Hist of the Methodists, chap. vi. p. 141. London: 1813.

2 had died during the year, and 2 were "set aside;" 164 received appointments. Sixty circuits were reported; the aggregate membership was 47,057, but this number comprised 6,968 in America, which now reappears in the statistics of the Minutes, though not among the "appointments." The total increase in Great Britain and Ireland was 1815.

The collections for the three Conference funds amounted to £1,088.

It was enjoined upon the preachers to visit all the prisoners they could. "By all means do this," says Wesley; "there cannot be a greater charity."*

As Methodism was essentially missionary in its organization, no distinct scheme of missionary propagandism had yet been suggested in the Conferences; it had spread over the United Kingdom, to the West Indies, and to the North American colonies, spontaneously; but at the present session an extraordinary mission to Africa was discussed,† and with much effect on the mind of the preachers, though the pious work was not yet to be attempted. "What was said on this occasion," writes Benson,‡ "and the prayers which followed, were manifestly attended with a great blessing, and the Lord was present of a truth." The spirit and reality of the missionary work existed among them, though not its form.

It is an interesting coincidence, that while the Conference was thus anticipating and prayerfully preparing itself for its later and unrivalled missionary achievements, there sat in its midst, for the first time, the marvellous man, small in person but gigantic in energy, who was to found, and represent for years, its great foreign enterprises, and to die sublimely at last as a sacrifice for them. Thomas Coke, LL.D., was born at Brecon, Wales, Sept. 9th, 1747,

* [It was at this Conference that remarks being made upon the nervous disorders from which many of the preachers suffered, Wesley was pressed for his advice, and replied, "Advice is made for them that will take it. But who are they? One in ten or twenty? Then I advise:—1. Touch no dram, tea, tobacco, or snuff. 2. Eat very light, if any supper. 3. Breakfast on nettle or orange-peel tea. 4. Lie down before ten; rise before six. 5. Every day use as much exercise as you can bear; or, 6. Murder yourself by inches."—E. E.]

† [This discussion originated in a petition from two young princes, who, having been stolen from the Coast of Guinea, were sent as slaves to America, whence, after remaining seven years, they escaped, were received with great kindness by the Methodists in Bristol, instructed in the truths of Christianity, and sent back to their native country, where they were desirous of propagating the truths they had learnt, and for that purpose they asked that ministers might be sent out.—E. E.]

‡ Macdonald's Memoir of Benson, p. 76.

the only child of wealthy parents.* In his seventeenth year he became a Gentleman Commoner of Jesus College, Oxford. On entering upon his ministry as a clergyman of the Establishment, his mind still wavered under the fashionable infidelity which then infected the University, and, to no small extent, the cultivated circles of English society. The writings of Sherlock had relieved his doubts, but had not led him to evangelical views of Christianity. He pursued the labours of his parish, at South Petherton, Somersetshire, in deep religious anxiety, and with so much earnestness as soon to excite the curiosity of his parishioners. His church became crowded, and as its vestry refused to furnish it with a gallery, he erected one at his own expense. Maxfield, Wesley's first lay preacher, had an interview with him, and led him to more spiritual views of religion.† Visiting a family in Devonshire, he found among its labourers an untutored but intelligent Methodist, a class-leader of the rustics of the neighbourhood. He sought this good man's conversation, and was surprised at his knowledge of divine truth. The nature of faith, justification, regeneration, and the evidences which attend them, the "unsearchable riches of Christ," were themes upon which the clergyman found he could be instructed by the unlettered peasant. They not only conversed but prayed together. The educated divine obtained from the lay Methodist his best knowledge on the profoundest subjects, and acknowledged that he owed him greater obligations, "with respect to [the means of] finding peace with God, and internal tranquillity of soul, than to any other person."

The alarming charge of Methodism was soon spread against him. He preached without notes, appointed evening meetings in various parts of the neighbouring country, and while preaching at one of them received the peace of God, which the rustic class-leader had described to him, and his "heart was filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory." He was now more zealous and more "irregular" than ever; he introduced the singing of hymns among his people, and preached Arminianism; for a brother clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Brown, rector of Portishead, had put Fletcher's works into his hands, and with Coke, as with thousands of others, they refuted the doctrine of limited salvation. He was admonished by the Bishop of Bath

* Life of Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D., by Samuel Drew, ch..

† [About the same time he met with Alleine's "Alarm to the Unconverted," a book for which, says Calamy, thousands have cause to thank God; the reading of this produced a revolution in his heart, and from that time he became an earnest seeker of salvation.—E. E.]

and Wells, dismissed by his rector, and threatened by a mob among his parishioners. He was at last "chimed out of the church;" the next Sunday he preached in the street, near the church doors; on the following Sunday he again took his stand there, and was about to be assailed with stones, collected for the purpose; he escaped without harm only by the courageous kindness of a young gentleman and his sister, who stood close to him, and whom the rabble respected too much to injure. On the day that he left his parish, to cast in his lot with the Methodists, the bells were rung, and hogsheads of cider were brought out for the free use of the mob. Petherton celebrated as a jubilee its deliverance from a "Methodist curate," but it gave to the world a man who was to rank second only to Wesley in the success of Arminian Methodism, and to be the first Protestant bishop of the New World. In 1776, Wesley, while in Somersetshire, writes: "Here I found Dr. Coke, who came twenty miles on purpose to meet me. I had much conversation with him, and a union then began which I trust shall never end."* Wesley had looked, in his old age, to Fletcher as a successor in his great work; the vicar of Madeley, however, was too feeble in health, and too retiring in his habits, to accept the vast responsibility.† Coke seemed now raised up as a substitute. His appearance on the scene at this period cannot but strike us as one of those notable providences which characterize the early history of Methodism. Whitefield had stirred the conscience of England and America for it; Wesley had legislated it into organic vigour and durability; Charles Wesley had supplied it with a rich psalmody; Fletcher had just settled its theological system; but now that Wesley was growing old, he needed a coadjutor in its administration; the field had enlarged beyond his largest expectations; the time had come for great foreign plans; and the American Revolution was rendering necessary an American organization of Methodism. Coke was the providential man for these new wants. He became as indefatigable a traveller and preacher as Wesley himself; for some years he visited Ireland annually, and presided in its Conferences; he traversed England, Scotland, Wales, and America. He was especially the "foreign minister" of Methodism. He possessed a zealous and vivacious spirit, which nothing could damp, but which caught inspiration from discouragements, and, like the impeded flood, grew stronger by obstructions. He had marked defects, but was one of

* Journal, Works, vol. iv. See also Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii.

† See the correspondence of Wesley and Fletcher on the subject in Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i. book ii. chap. 4. 1862.

the most disinterested characters in the history of the Methodistic movement—an example of ministerial zeal worthy of universal admiration and imitation. His stature was low, his voice effeminate, but his soul was as vast as ever dwelt in a human frame. Though he became the first bishop of Methodism in the United States, he found not in a diocese co-extensive with the new republic room for his energies. Actuated by an impulse which allowed him no rest, he was perpetually contriving new measures for the extension of the cause which he had so providentially embraced. His plans, had he been a man of ordinary abilities, would have entitled him to the name of fanatic; but he was one of those rare spirits whose greatest conceptions and schemes are the legitimate products of their energies. He crossed the Atlantic eighteen times at his own expense. Until his death he had charge of the Methodist missions throughout the world. He founded the negro missions of the West Indies, which have exerted an important influence on the history of those islands. They included fifteen thousand members at the time of his death. He visited his missions, spent almost the whole of his patrimonial fortune in their support, preached for them, and begged for them from door to door. The missionary spirit was with him "as a burning fire shut up in his bones," and during his life, it was not deemed necessary to organize a missionary society among the Wesleyans, for he embodied that great interest in his own person. When a veteran of almost seventy years, we shall see him presenting himself before the Wesleyan Conference as a missionary for the East Indies. The Conference objected on account of the expense, when, offering to pay the charges of the outfit himself, to the amount of six thousand pounds, he prevailed over all objections, and embarked with a small band of labourers. He died on the voyage, and was buried in the sea; but the undertaking succeeded, and the Wesleyan East India missions are the result. It has been justly asserted that, except Wesley, no man was ever connected with the Methodist body who contributed more to extend the blessings of Christianity among mankind. His colleague in the episcopacy of the American Church would not allow of even this exception; "a minister of Christ," said Asbury, when the news of his death arrived, "a minister of Christ, in zeal, in labours, and in services, the greatest man of the last century." Wesley used to say, that Coke was a right hand to him. It was a noble sentiment recorded by him at sea, on his first voyage to America, and illustrates his own character as fully as language can: "I want the wings of an eagle, and the voice of a trumpet, that I may proclaim the Gospel through the east and the

west, the north and the south." There is genuine sublimity in the end of this flaming evangelist. Such a man belongs to no locality, he belongs to the world; though dead, without a grave, his influence has been widening daily over the earth, and it was fitting that he should be buried in the ocean, whose waves might sound his requiem on the shores of all lands. He will appear often in the future course of our narrative, not without faults, but always admirable for his religious heroism and his incalculable usefulness.

He was appointed at this Conference to the London circuit, but soon began his general labours.*

On the 3rd of August, 1779, the thirty-sixth Conference commenced in London: 11 candidates were received; 9 probationers were admitted into membership; 4 members retired; 2 had died since the preceding session; 167 received appointments.† The circuits numbered 62; the aggregate membership was 42,486, exclusive of America: the increase was 2,397;‡ the collections for the Conference funds, £948.

The Chapel Debt Fund was now detached from that for the Yearly Expenses, or rather abolished, and it was recorded, "1. Let every circuit bear its own burden, and not lean upon the Conference. 2. Tell every one expressly, 'We do not make a subscription for paying debts.' 3. Let all the Assistants in Ireland do the same as those in England."

As Methodism still made little progress in Scotland,§ it was asked, "What can be done to revive the work in Scotland?" and answered: "1. Preach abroad as much as possible. 2. Try every town and village. 3. Visit every member of every Society at home."

* Moore (Life of Wesley, vol. ii. b. viii. chap. 1) differs from Drew in some details respecting Coke's Life; there is an apparent prejudice in some of the statements of the former. I have judged, as best I could, between them. Drew wrote from Coke's own data.

† Including both the Wesleys; they are included in all my estimates.

‡ [Notwithstanding this large increase in the whole United Kingdom, many circuits showed a very decided decrease in the number of members, and the attention of the Conference being called to the matter, it was ascribed, "partly to want of preaching abroad; partly to prejudice against the King, and speaking evil of dignities; but chiefly to the increase of worldly-mindedness and conformity to the world."—E.E.]

§ [In five years the increase in the Society at Arbroath was only five. Wesley inquired into the cause of this, and found that the preachers were afraid to preach plainly the peculiar doctrines of Methodism. Mr. Brackenbury, when preaching good old Methodist doctrines, was told that the doctrine of perfection would not do for the meridian of Edinburgh.—E.E.]

Henry Moore, afterwards noted as a Methodist writer, and for many years a prominent preacher, was among the candidates admitted on probation at this session. He was born in Dublin, in 1751, and heard Wesley in that city in his childhood. On removing to London, he often attended the preaching of Madan and Charles Wesley, and the religious impressions of his early life were renewed. On returning to Ireland he heard Smyth, who, though a nephew of an archbishop, had been expelled, as we have seen, from his curacy, on the charge of Methodism. "This," said Moore, "must be a good man, and I will go and hear him." He now became an habitual attendant at the Methodist Chapel, and after a prolonged struggle with his conscience could write, "The love of God was shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost given unto me, and I rejoiced in hope of the glory of God with joy unspeakable." * Thenceforward he was a Methodist. His family was chagrined at his change of life; but he succeeded in introducing domestic worship among them. He visited the prisons, braving fever, and pestilence, and the still harder trial of agonizing sympathy with felons condemned to the gallows. He was induced to exhort, and at last to preach in a deserted weaver's shop, which was furnished for the purpose with seats and a desk; multitudes flocked to hear him, and when the circuit preacher visited the place he found a society organized with twenty-six members. Thus initiated into the Methodistic work, he sought still higher spiritual qualifications for it in fasting and prayer, in the meditation of Holy Scripture, and diligent studies. He records many special manifestations of God to him at this period of his history. "One day in particular," he writes, "in secret prayer, He so graciously visited me, that from that hour to the present, (and it is now more than fifty years,) notwithstanding unfaithfulness that will ever humble me before Him, I never came under the power of unbelief. 'The things not seen,' of which the apostle says, 'faith is the evidence,' have been as constant and clear to my mind as the things which I see with my bodily eyes." Happy and rare experience!

Wesley's discerning eye could appreciate the promise of the young man, and in the spring of the present year he was ordered to take the field as an itinerant on the Londonderry circuit, to supply the place of a labourer who had died there. "I departed for my circuit," he says, "praising and blessing God." After a few years of faithful service in Ireland, during which he made

* Life of the Rev. Henry Moore, by Mrs. Richard Smith. London: 1844.

rapid improvement in his studies, Wesley valued him so highly that he removed him to London, where he made him his confidential counsellor. They met in the morning at five o'clock to answer letters; they travelled together extensively in the counties of Norfolk, Kent, and Oxford, and Moore was consulted on all important measures of the Connexion. Wesley had so high an estimation of his talents and character that he endeavoured to procure him ordination in the national Church, but failing, ordained him himself, assisted by two presbyters of the Establishment, Peard Dickinson and James Creighton.

Returning to Ireland, Moore did much for the establishment of Methodism in that country. He preached often in the open air, and shared the usual persecutions of his ministerial brethren. On one occasion he took his stand upon a chair, in Lower Abbey-street, Dublin, and began to sing a hymn. An immense multitude came running from all directions. For some time they were quiet, staring with inquisitive curiosity at the scene. He perceived that they were mostly Papists, as they bowed and courtesied at the name of Jesus in the hymn. During his prayer many knelt on the stones, but at his conclusion a woman cried out, "Where is the Hail Mary?" Its omission began to open their eyes. He announced his text, and was proceeding with his discourse, when another Papist interrupted him with exclamations of surprise and remonstrance. The vast assembly now became divided, a part contending for the preacher, a part for popery, and a genuine Irish riot ensued. Several of the most boisterous of the mob endeavoured to reach him in order to pull him down; others fought back the assailants. Moore's wife and a young female friend who stood near him held fast the chair; their courage alone saved him, for an Irish mob is usually as gallant as clamorous; and "such," writes Moore, "is the Irish feeling respecting females, that if the nearest ruffian had interfered with the two defenceless women, he would soon have had the whole assembly upon him." The rioters were determined, however, to enjoy themselves in their own way. Clods and rotten eggs flew in all directions. Moore saw, he says, "a blessed young man" who stood close to him, listening with his eyes shut, struck by an egg which sadly besmeared him; but he wiped his face, and took no further notice of it. He at length concluded with an appeal to his congregation, which seemed to have some effect, so that he retired home unmolested. A drunken sailor immediately stepped on the chair, and commenced singing a song. The multitude shouted; and, when the song was concluded, the tar began to

preach in his way. "Alas!" says Moore, "I had soon to lament over him! When he had amused himself and his auditors for a considerable time, he attempted to pass from the quay to his ship, but, slipping from the plank, notwithstanding all the exertions made to save him, he found a watery grave!"

The preacher was not to be conquered; he maintained faithfully the contested post, and one of the principal Methodist chapels in Dublin now stands in the street, a monument of his successful labours and sufferings.

Moore was appointed by Wesley one of the trustees of his manuscripts and books; he became his biographer;* he lived to be the last survivor of the men whom Wesley had ordained; his pen and his preaching promoted Methodism through nearly seventy years, and he died in his ninety-third year, its most venerable patriarch.

The thirty-seventh Conference assembled at Bristol, August 1, 1780. It was resolved that in future nine or ten days should be allowed for each session, that its business might be more thoroughly considered. The "Large Minutes," containing the whole discipline o. the body, were revised and solemnly confirmed. A personal difficulty had occurred between Benson and Coke, now two of the most important members of the Conference. The latter had hastily suspected the former of heretical views on the character of Christ. A corespondence between them had not proved satisfactory to either, and the subject was brought before the session. Wesley's sagacity immediately perceived what disastrous consequences might ensue from the agitation of such a question, mixed up with personal feelings, among his preachers. He therefore refused to have it discussed, but referred it to a committee, which exonerated Benson from the charge of the earnest and impulsive doctor. The latter showed his characteristic amiability, by offering to ask formally the forgiveness of Benson before the whole Conference. They cordially shook hands in presence of their brethren, and thus wisely and charitably ended a dispute which, if drawn out into a polemical debate, might have made havoc among the ministry and societies.† Their generous conduct is worthy of commemoration as an example for their successors through all time — the wisest possible solution of such difficulties. If Benson had not the clearest views on the question, he was not provoked into obstinate error by opposition, and his subsequent writings show thorough orthodoxy.

* We owe to him also the Memoir of Mary Fletcher.

† Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1822, p. 74, compared with Macdonald's Life of Benson, p. 106.

At this session 11 candidates were admitted on probation; 4 were received into membership; 5 ceased to travel; 2 had died since the last Conference; 171 received appointments; 64 circuits were reported; the aggregate membership was 43,830; the increase 1344; the returns for the Conference funds amounted to £1118.

During the present decade the membership of the societies had increased 14,424.* The itinerant ministry, exclusive of preachers in America, had gained fifty-two labourers, notwithstanding the large annual recessions to the ranks of the local preachers. The number of circuits had advanced from fifty to sixty-four.

The aggregate British and American membership, exclusive of the West Indies, was 52,334; the aggregate itinerant ministry 213, besides many hundreds of local preachers;† and in every county and most towns in England, were societies and chapels. Notwithstanding the agitation of the Calvinistic controversy, Methodism had steadily and vigorously advanced. Some of the mightiest men of its ministry entered its field during this period; and Wesley, hoary with seventy-seven years, still led them on with unyielding health and energy. The growth and stability of his cause led him to indulge prophetic hopes of its continued success, which fourscore subsequent years have not defeated. "How vast," he exclaims, "is the increase of the work of God, particularly in the most rugged and uncultivated places! How does he send the springs of grace also into the valleys that run among the hills!"‡ Toward the close of the present decade he wrote to a friend: "The remark of Luther, 'that a revival of religion seldom continues above thirty years,' has been verified many times in several countries. But it will not always hold. The present revival of religion in England has already continued fifty years. And, blessed be God! it is at least as likely to continue as it was twenty or thirty years ago. Indeed, it is far more likely; as it not only spreads wider, but sinks deeper than ever; more and more persons being able to testify that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. We have therefore reason to hope that *this revival of religion will continue, and continually increase, till the time when all Israel shall be saved, and the fulness of the Gentiles shall come.*"§

The hope is more probable to-day than it was when Wesley uttered it, eighty years ago.

* The number for 1770 was erroneously given at 29,179 in book iv. chap. 6. It should have been 29,406.

† Coke and Moore's Life of Wesley, book iii. chap. 1.

‡ Journal, May 1, 1780. § Letter 717, Works, vol. xiii.

CHAPTER VI.

LABOURS OF WESLEY FROM 1780 TO 1785.

Wesley's happy Old Age—Affecting Reminiscences—Wesley and little children—Dr. Johnson—Disturbances in the Societies—Grand climacterical year of Methodism—Wesley's Deed of Declaration—Its Provisions and Character—His Ordination of Coke—Condition of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America—Condition of Methodism—Wesley solicits the Bishop of London to ordain a Preacher for them—Fletcher's Interest for America—The Episcopal Organization of American Methodism—It precedes that of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

During the first half of the decade from 1780 to 1790, Wesley presented scarcely a single evidence of advanced age except his gray hairs. He notices his birthday, from year to year, with increasing interest, and with grateful wonder at his continued vigour. He says, June 28, 1780, after preaching in the public square at Sheffield: "I can hardly think I have entered this day into the seventy-eighth year of my age. By the blessing of God I am just the same as when I entered the twenty-eighth. This hath God wrought, chiefly by my constant exercise, my rising early, and preaching morning and evening."* At his next birthday a similar record is made. He enters his eightieth year exclaiming, "Blessed be God! my time is not 'labour and sorrow.'" He knows no more pain or bodily infirmities than at five-and-twenty. This he still imputes, 1. To the providence of God fitting him for his peculiar work. 2. To his still travelling four or five thousand miles a-year. 3. To his command of sleep night or day, whenever he needs it. 4. To his rising at a set hour. And, 5. To his constant preaching, particularly in the morning.

On the next anniversary he is still surprised that his eye waxes not dim; that the strength, mental and physical, of his thirtieth year is unimpaired. In 1784 the marvellous story is repeated. "To-day I entered on my eighty-second year, and found myself just as strong to labour, and as fit for any exercise of body or mind, as I was forty years ago. I do not impute this to second causes, but to the Sovereign Lord of all. It is He who bids the sun of

* The citations from Wesley in this chapter are from his Journals, 1780—1790, except when otherwise indicated.

life stand still so long as it pleaseth Him." He is as strong at eighty-one as he was at twenty-one; and abundantly more healthy, being a stranger to the headache, toothache, and other bodily disorders which attended his youth.

In 1785 he writes: "By the good Providence of God, I finished the eighty-second year of my age. Is any thing too hard for God? It is now eleven years since I have felt any such thing as weariness: many times I speak till my voice fails, and I can speak no longer: frequently I walk till my strength fails, and I can walk no further; yet even then I feel no sensation of weariness; but am perfectly easy from head to foot. I dare not impute this to natural causes: it is the will of God."

His associates could not perceive in him any signs of intellectual decay, nor can the critic detect any in his writings. Without the usual return of the mental weakness of childhood, there is apparent some return of its pure and simple freshness and vivacity. Increased sunshine seems to illuminate his daily life; he records beautiful impressions of nature and books more frequently; he compares and criticizes Ariosto and Tasso; he indulges occasionally in dramatic reading and criticism; he discusses with zest the question of Ossian's poetry, then rife in literary circles; he notes, in brief but picturesque passages, the scenery of his outdoor preaching and the landscapes of his travels, and visits oftener, and describes more fully than ever, the gardens of the nobility. "Elegant" buildings (a phrase often applied by him with pleasure to new Methodist chapels), and fine music, and grand old ruins, excite his admiration; gazing on the "once magnificent cathedral" of Inverness, "What barbarians," he says, "must they have been who hastened the destruction of this beautiful pile by taking the lead off the roof!" He is no Puritan iconoclast. He is refreshed by the bursting forth of the spring in the north, and the return of the singing birds. "How gladly would I repose a while here!" he writes of a locality with a pleasant garden and shady walk around the neighbouring meadows; "but repose is not for me in this world." He makes two voyages to Holland during this decade; preaches in the English and Independent Churches at the Hague, Utrecht, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam; is received with veneration into the best of religious families, native and English; "expounds" in their circles, delights in their piety, and writes with the interest of youth respecting the scenery, gardens, and public edifices. If a sense of sadness comes over him sometimes, when local reminiscences recall the distant past, it is still more poetic than painful.

He frequently passes through Epworth, his birth-place, "which he yet loved beyond most places in the world;" he is still denied its parish pulpit, for its vicar is a godless man; Wesley's society, however, flourishes; his chapel cannot contain his congregation, and he preaches to larger assemblies than ever he had seen there; he walks pensively through the churchyard, where he had preached to a former generation on the tomb of his father; "I felt," he says, "the truth, 'one generation goeth and another cometh;' see how the earth drops its inhabitants as the tree drops its leaves." In 1784 he preached at Kingswood, under the shade of a double row of trees, which he writes, "I planted about forty years ago. How little did any one think that they would answer such an intention! The sun shone as hot as it used to do even in Georgia, but his rays could not pierce our canopy, and our Lord, meantime, shone upon many souls, and refreshed them that were weary." But his old colliers were now nearly all sleeping in their neighbouring graves; a few only lingered, bent with toil and years, amid the vast throngs that still gathered about him, wondering with tearful eyes at the "old man for ever young." He records, with mingled sadness and joy, frequent visits to dying saints, the friends of his early life; he takes leave of them as a traveller going on a journey, but soon to meet them again. His congregations continually remind him that he has passed into another age. In an immense assembly at Garth Heads "there were few that remembered his first sermon there." At Cardiff he records the names of the chief Methodists who had first gathered around him in that town; but now they "and a long train were gone hence, and were to be seen no more." At Brinsley he met the society privately, and found but one or two of the original members, "most of them having gone to Abraham's bosom." At St. Just he rejoiced to find some of his oldest brethren still surviving, "although many had gone;" but the same day nature reminded him of the change of all things; for clambering down the rocks to the edge of the water, he observed that the sea had "gained some hundred yards" since his first visit. At St. Ives he found that good "old John Nance," whose house had been attacked by the mob which tore down the chapel in the early days of fiery trial, had gone; but he had gone well; "sitting behind the preacher in the pulpit, he sunk down, was carried out, and fell asleep." He is permitted to stand again in the pulpit of St. Giles, in London, where, more than fifty years since, he had preached before going to America. "Are they not passed as a watch in the night?" he writes. After the extraordinary

changes of his history, we are not surprised when he adds that "a solemn awe sat on the whole congregation." At Wednesbury, "the mother society of Staffordshire," he found, in his eighty-fifth year, but a few of the "old standers left, only three out of three hundred and fifteen;" "a new generation had sprung up;" but what tales of hard fought battles and well-won victories could these three tell, respecting the days when Wednesbury and most of Staffordshire were, for months, agitated by mobs and tumults hardly short of civil war;* when the multitudinous persecutors were called together by sound of horn, kept their flag flying for days in the market-place of Walsall, marched in detachments from village to village, knocking down the Methodists in the streets, scattering their families, abusing their women "in a manner," says Wesley, "too horrible to be related;" dilapidating their houses, so that Charles Wesley could afterwards distinguish them as he rode through Darlaston by "their marks of violence;" and holding virtual possession of a large part of the region for nearly half a year.

He calls on his old friend and first lay-preacher, Maxfield; finds him sinking under years and paralysis, and, kneeling down, invokes blessings upon his last days, and preaches for him in his chapel. Romaine still lingers, and meets him during "an agreeable hour" in the house of Ireland, near Bristol. Many an old reminiscence was doubtless recalled in that hour. He pauses often at Shoreham, to pray with Perronet, the chief of his first friends and counsellors, now bending under ninety years and more, but rejoicing at the open gate of heaven, and soon to enter it. In Lincolnshire he meets Delamotte, who accompanied him to Georgia, and lodges with him a night; "he seems," says Wesley, "to be just the same as when we lodged together five-and-forty years ago, only he complained of the infirmities of age, which, through the mercy of God, I know nothing of." He spends two hours with his old friend, "that great man," Dr. Johnson; but he is also now "sinking into the grave." The great moralist delighted in Wesley's conversation, and was impatient only of his economy of time. "He talks well on any subject," said Johnson; "I could converse with him all night."†

* See Book ii. chap. 5 and 6.

† See Whitehead's Life of Wesley, book iii. chap. 6. Johnson discerned and esteemed Wesley's real character though less candid toward Whitefield; the latter, "he believed sincerely, meant well," says Boswell, (Life of Johnson, Anno 1773;) "but he had a mixture of politics and ostentation, whereas

Old families which used to entertain him drop away one after another; "their houses know neither them nor him any more." His letters are more numerous than ever; his female correspondence was always extensive, and marked by the delicacy yet fervid sentiment which usually characterize the regard for woman entertained by superior minds—such minds, at least, as are great in character as well as in faculty. A pensive eagerness now distinguishes it; for, how many tender flowers, which had bloomed by his nurture, had faded and perished along his path! To one, he writes: "I sometimes fear lest you also, as those I tenderly love generally have been, should be snatched away. But let us live to-day." "I had hopes," he again writes, "of seeing a friend at Lewisham, in my way, and so I did; but it was in her coffin. It is well, since she finished her course with joy. In due time I shall see her in glory."*

Such changes, and the other saddening associations of extreme age, could not diminish the glow and animation of his healthful temperament. He is described as still cheerful, fascinating even in his conversation, the delight of the Christian households which entertained him in his rapid movements. "No cynical remarks on the levity of youth embittered his discourse." Children, wondering at the tales they heard from their fathers of his early struggles, and at the marvels of his old age, flocked about him with fondness, not only at their homes but in public assemblies. They reverenced, but could never fear the bland old man. As the instincts can less readily be deceived than the understanding, a man whose heart can

Wesley thought of religion only." Toplady satirized Wesley as "the old Fox tarred and feathered," for the use he made of Johnson's pamphlet, "Taxation no Tyranny." Johnson, however, not only approved Wesley's use of it, but felt complimented by it. He wrote Wesley, in return, one of his finest compliments. "I have thanks likewise to return for the addition of your important suffrage to my argument on the American question. To have gained such a mind as yours may justly confirm me in my own opinion. What effect my paper has had upon the public I know not; but I have no reason to be discouraged. The lecturer was surely in the right who, though he saw his audience slinking away, refused to quit the chair while Plato stayed."—Gentleman's Magazine, 1797, p. 455, and Boswell's Johnson, Anno 1776.

* "It continually appears, from Mr. Wesley's mode of writing, that his female disciples consulted him as one to whom they ascribed the *spirit* as well as the *wisdom* of an apostle. The subjects treated of establish this fact, and present, as it were, the reflected image of as unqualified a confidence as could be placed in a human being. We have then, virtually, in those letters the great body of Mr. Wesley's female friends bearing to his character the most unimpeachable as well as the most concordant witness."—Letter of Alexander Knox to Robert Southey, Southey's Wesley, App.

love childhood can never be unloved by children, for he can never be basely bad; and children instinctively perceive whom they can trust. Wesley had peculiar tenderness for them. When ascending the pulpit of the church at Raithby, in which he was often allowed to preach, a child sat in his way on the stairs; instead of ordering it down, he took it up in his arms, kissed it, and, passing, placed it tenderly on the same spot.* On entering Oldham he found the "whole street lined with children;" they ran around him and before him on his way to the spot on which he was to preach, and after the sermon "a whole troop, boys and girls, closed him in, and would not let him go till he had shaken each of them by the hand." At Yeadon he speaks of "an army of little children," full as numerous and almost as loving as those which surrounded him at Oldham. At Bolton, "such an army of them" got about him when he came out of the chapel, that he could scarce disengage himself from them. At Stockton-on-Tees, as soon as he came down from the desk, he was enclosed by a body of them; one after another sunk down upon their knees, until they were all kneeling: he kneeled down himself, and commenced praying for them. Multitudes of people ran back into the house. "The fire," says Wesley, "kindled and ran from heart to heart, till few if any were unaffected. Is not this a new thing in the earth? God begins his work in children. Thus it has been in Cornwall, Manchester, and Epworth." At another time he speaks of a little girl who had sat up all night, and then walked two miles to see him. He took her into his carriage, and was surprised and delighted with her simple conversation during the rest of his ride.

Wesley is described as still fresh in colour, with a brilliant eye and vivacious spirits. Henry Moore, who was habitually with him in these later years, says that few saw him without being struck with his appearance, and many who had been greatly prejudiced against him, were known to change their opinion the moment they were introduced into his presence; that in his countenance and demeanour there was a cheerfulness mingled with gravity, and a sprightliness which was the natural result of an unusual flow of spirits, and yet was accompanied by every mark of the most serene tranquillity; that his aspect, particularly in profile, had a strong character of acuteness and penetration; that in dress he was a pattern of neatness and simplicity—a narrow plaited stock, a coat with

* Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1840, p. 127. An ignorant Papist, as we shall hereafter see, was, by a similar example, won to Methodism, and became one of its most useful preachers.

a small upright collar, no buckles at the knees, no silk or velvet in any part of his apparel, and a head as white as snow, suggested an idea of something primitive and apostolic; while an air of neatness was diffused over his whole person.*

"So fine an old man," says another who often saw him, "I never saw. The happiness of his mind beamed forth in his countenance; every look showed how fully he enjoyed 'the gay remembrance of a life well spent,' and wherever he went he diffused a portion of his own felicity. . . . While the grave and serious were charmed with his wisdom, his sportive sallies of innocent mirth delighted even the young and thoughtless; and both saw in his uninterrupted cheerfulness the excellence of true religion. . . . In him even old age appeared delightful—like an evening without a cloud—and it was impossible to observe him without wishing fervently, 'May my latter end be like his!'" †

Among other reasons given by Wesley for his health and long life was his exemption from anxiety. It was probably as much an effect as a cause of his constitutional vigour. Occasions of anxiety he certainly had; few men of his day could have had more; and they multiplied as his years advanced. The fate of the great cause he had founded must now have become an habitual question to him. He had also almost habitual necessity to defend it against the discontents of preachers and people. Let it not be supposed, as we trace him through prosperous societies and jubilant welcomes, that he met no such annoyances, no decayed "appointments," or wrangling "classes;" they were continually occurring. At the beginning of this decade the utmost endeavours of himself and his brother were necessary to control a revolt from his authority at Bath, where one of his preachers, Alexander M'Nab, refused to recognize another whom he had sent, and produced a popular disaffection, which for some time proved disastrous to the prosperity of the society, and extended even to the societies at Bristol. The Birstal Methodists, now that John Nelson was no more, were also agitated by a prolonged controversy between their trustees and Wesley concerning his power, and that of the Conference after him, to appoint their pastor. A similar trouble broke out at Dewsbury, and John Atlay, after serving as an itinerant about nine years, and

* Moore's Life of Wesley, book viii. chap. 5. He was small in stature. In his Journal, Nov. 19, 1783, he says: "When I was at Sevenoaks I made an odd remark. In the year 1769, I weighed a hundred and twenty-two pounds. In 1783, I weighed not a pound more or less. I doubt whether such another instance is to be found in Great Britain."

† Alexander Knox, Esq., Watson's Wesley.

as Wesley's book-steward in London some fifteen years more, deserted him, to take charge of the alienated society.

The abstract right of these people to choose their own pastors could not be denied, but they had also the right to waive that abstract right, and they had virtually done so by entering into communion with the Methodist Connexion on its recognized terms; to revolt from it now was to set an example which, if generally followed, would break up the Connexion, reduce it to congregationalism, and overthrow that system of itinerancy which was one of the chief conditions of its ministerial efficiency, and to the loss of which, through the control of pulpits by local bodies of trustees, the decline of Calvinistic Methodism has been ascribed, as we have noticed. Wesley therefore maintained rigidly this peculiarity of his cause.*

Other measures, which could not fail to provoke excitement and hostility, had now also become necessary for the security of Methodism. The year 1784 has been called its grand climacterical year,† as that in which Wesley gave to his Conference a legal settlement by his noted Deed of Declaration, and to American Methodism an episcopal organization, by ordaining for it, with his own hands, a bishop and two presbyters.

Hitherto the deeds of chapels and preachers' houses, or parsonages, had conveyed them to trustees for the use of such preachers as John or Charles Wesley should send to them, and, after the death of the Wesleys, of such as the Conference should appoint. Wesley, at the instance of Coke, ascertained by consultation with legal authorities, that the law would not recognize the Conference unless that body were more precisely defined, and that it could not claim control over its pulpits. Wesley reported this opinion to the Conference, and it requested him to draw up a definition of its character and powers at his discretion. The Conference had not been an incorporated institution; it had met at Wesley's call for consultation with him respecting the interests of the Connexion; his power in it had been supreme; and preachers who attended its sessions came at his express invitation.‡ He now named, in his Deed of Declaration, one hundred of them to be the legal Conference after his death, a number larger than had usually attended its sessions,

* See Wesley's allusions to the case of M'Nab, Journal, 1779, 1780; also "The case of Birstal House;" and "The Case of Dewsbury House;" "Four Letters to Mr. John Atlay," and "A Word to whom it may concern."—Works, vol. xiii.

† Southey's Life of Wesley, chap. 29.

‡ Works, vol. xiii.

and which he deemed sufficient to secure the safety of a "multitude of counsellors;" as many as could be wisely withdrawn annually for a week or more from the appointments, or economically convened for business. They were to meet annually at London, Bristol, Leeds, or any such place as they should choose; they were to fill all vacancies in their own body; their sessions were not to last over three weeks, or less than five days; forty members must be present in order to the validity of any act or vote, unless the whole body should, by death or other cause, be reduced to less than that number. They could elect no one to membership who had not been a year in "full connexion" as a preacher. They must appoint a president and secretary; the former was to have the right of a double vote, and such other privileges as the Conference might grant him. An absentee, without leave, from two successive annual sessions, forfeited his membership, unless he appeared on the first day of the third session, or was voted exemption by the body. The Conference thus constituted had the right to admit preachers on probation, to receive probationers into membership, and to expel offenders for sufficient reason. They could not appoint, to any of the chapels, any preacher who was not a member of the Methodist Connexion, and no appointment could be made for a longer term than three years, except in the cases of ordained clergymen of the Church of England. They had power to commission members of their body to represent them in Ireland or in any other part of the earth, the official acts of such representatives being recognized as acts of the Conference. If it should be reduced below forty members, and continue so for three years, or should it neglect to meet for three years, it was thereby dissolved, and the chapels and preachers' houses thenceforward belonged to their respective trustees in trust, for the occupancy of such pastors as the trustees should appoint. The life estate of John and Charles Wesley in the houses and chapels of the Connexion, was not to be affected by this deed. Subsequently, by a wise accommodation, all the preachers who were in connexion with the Conference were permitted to vote, and such as had been members a given number of years were allowed to put, by their votes, the President in nomination for the confirmation of the Legal Hundred.*

The necessity of such a constitution, in the event of Wesley's death, was obvious and absolute. The peculiar economy of Methodism could not otherwise proceed. It must cease to be itinerant,

* Crowther's Portraiture, p. 43. Coke recommended these concessions.

must subside into congregationalism, or else adopt some such organization as this. The deed was sagaciously framed, and time has well proved its wisdom.* It was also as liberal toward the preachers as it could safely be; much more so than had hitherto been the personal authority of Wesley, or than the episcopal economy adopted about the same time by its American preachers. It vested all his own power in a hundred members of the ministry; the number was certainly sufficient, and most probably too large for its practical purposes; but, as there were now one hundred and ninety-one, some felt offended by their omission, and during the remainder of his life he was to suffer not a few perplexities from their discontent.† It was but an expansion of the plan, for the perpetuation of the Connexion, which he had presented to the Conference in 1769, which had been signed at subsequent sessions by most of the preachers, and which proposed to vest at his death, in a "committee," power to do whatever he then did, and was "universally approved." ‡ The Deed was enrolled in the High Court of Chan-

* The consequence has been, that the ministers have generally remained most firmly united by affection and mutual confidence, and that few serious disputes have ever risen among them, or have extended beyond a very few individuals. Ecclesiastical history does not, perhaps, present an instance of an equal number of ministers brought into contact so close, and called so frequently together for the discussion of various subjects, among whom so much general unanimity, both as to doctrine and points of discipline, has prevailed, joined with so much real goodwill and friendship toward each other for so great a number of years."—Watson's Wesley, chap. 12.

† John Hampson, sen., one of his preachers, immediately issued against it, "An Appeal to the Rev. John and Charles Wesley; to all the Preachers who act in connexion with them, and to every member of their respective Societies in England, Scotland, Ireland, and America!" Hampson had been one of the most urgent advisers of Wesley in favour of some such legal provision; but the omission of his name from the one hundred reversed his logic entirely.

‡ Hampson's Appeal. See this plan, in book iv. chap. 6. Consult also Moore's Life of Wesley, vol ii. book viii. chap 1, for a correction of the misrepresentations of Whitehead's Life of Wesley. Moore says: "I can state with the fullest certainty, that what Dr. Whitehead has asserted, respecting Mr. Wesley having repented of this transaction, is totally unfounded. On the contrary, he reviewed it always with high satisfaction; and praised God, who had brought him through a business which he had long contemplated with earnest desire, and yet with many fears. The issue, even to this day, proves the wisdom of the measure; and that it was in the order of HIM, without whom 'nothing is strong, nothing is holy.' Many chapels have been restored to the societies to whom they in justice belonged, by the upright decisions of our Courts of Equity, so that now no fears are entertained of any chapels settled according to this Deed." Whitehead's Life of Wesley should not be consulted by any whose acquaintance with other contemporary authorities is not thorough enough to enable them to correct that author's immoderate prejudices.

cery, and has ever since been a firm anchorage to Wesleyan Methodism. Wesley himself deemed it "a foundation likely to stand as long as the sun and moon endure."*

Dr. Coke was blamed severely as responsible for the limitation of the names in the Deed. He issued an "Address to the Methodist Societies in Great Britain and Ireland on the Settlement of the Preaching-houses," in which he fully vindicated himself. The credit of first suggesting the Deed seems in fact to be due to him.† He strangely combined the comprehensiveness and prescience of a statesmanlike mind with the weaknesses of an impulsive heart. His agency in the organic settlement of English Methodism by the Deed of Declaration, is one of his greatest historical honours; but he expressly declares that he was "not concerned in the limitation of the number, or the selection of the one hundred preachers." Wesley himself says, that in naming these preachers, as he had *no advisers* so he had no respect to persons, but simply set down those which, according to the best of his judgment, were most proper.‡

In this most momentous measure Wesley followed, as was usual with him, the indications of Providence. The time had arrived for it; he was beyond eighty years of age; his decease was a daily liability; his cause had grown to an extent, and assumed an importance, which demanded legal definitions and guarantees to secure it from general confusion, if not from wreck, at his death; and the results of the plan which he adopted have demonstrated his prudent foresight.

It is another of the great providential facts of his history, that the same year which thus gave a constitutional security to Methodism in Great Britain, was signalized by its episcopal organization in America; a measure which, by its consequences, may well be ranked among the most important events of Wesley's important life. Here again did he follow, with simple wisdom, the guidance of that Divine Providence, the recognition of which, in the affairs of men, and especially in the affairs of the Church, was the crowning maxim of his philosophy, and the crowning fact of his policy. He had been providentially preparing for this new and momentous exigency, by that gradual development of his personal opinions which we have already traced. Bigoted even as a High Churchman at the beginning of his career, we have seen him, year after year, reaching more liberal views of ecclesiastical policy. Nearly forty years before his

* Coke and Moore's Life of Wesley, p. 356.
† See his Address in Drew's Life of Coke, chap. 3.
‡ Life by Coke and Moore, p. 356.

The demand was not only urgent, it was logically right; but by the majority of the preachers it was not deemed expedient. The prudent delay which Wesley, notwithstanding his liberal ecclesiastical principles, had practised in England, afforded a lesson which their good sense could not disregard. They exhorted their people, therefore, to wait patiently till he could be consulted. Thomas Rankin, one of Wesley's missionaries, presiding at the Conference of Deer Creek, Maryland, 1777, induced them to delay one year. At the next session the subject was again prudently postponed, as no English preacher was present, Rankin having returned to England, and Asbury being absent and sick. In 1779 the question occasioned a virtual schism, the preachers of the South being resolute for the administration of the sacraments, those of the North still pleading for patient delay. The latter met in Conference at Judge White's residence, the retreat of Asbury, in Delaware; the former at Brokenback Church, Fluvanna county, Virginia, where they made their own appointments, and proceeded to ordain themselves by the hands of three of their senior members, unwilling that their people should longer be denied their right to the Lord's Supper, and their children and probationary members the rite of baptism. At the session of 1780 Asbury was authorized to visit the southern preachers, and, if possible, conciliate them. He met them in Conference; they appeared determined not to recede, but at last consented to suspend the administration of the sacraments till further advice could be received from Wesley. The breach was thus happily repaired, but must evidently soon again be opened if redress should not be obtained.*

What could Wesley do under these circumstances? What but exercise the right of Ordination which he had for years theoretically claimed, but practically and prudently declined? He had importuned the authorities of the English Church in behalf of the Americans. In this very year he had written two letters to Lowth, Bishop of London, imploring ordination for a single preacher, who might appease the urgency of the American brethren by travelling among them as a presbyter, and by giving them the sacraments; but the request was denied, Lowth replying that "there are three ministers in that country already." "What are three," rejoined Wesley, "to watch over all the souls in that extensive country?" "I mourn for poor America, for the sheep scattered up and down therein. Part of them have no shepherds at all. . . . and the case of the rest is little better, for their

* Bangs's History, M. E. Church, vol. i.

own shepherds pity them not."* If there was any imprudence on the part of Wesley in this emergency, it was certainly in his long-continued patience, for he delayed yet nearly four years. When he yielded, it was only after the triumph of the American arms and the acknowledged independence of the colonies; and not then till urged to it by his most revered counsellors. Fletcher of Madeley was one of these. That good man's interest for American Methodism should endear his memory to the American Church. He had thoughts at one time of going to the New World, and of giving himself to its struggling societies, but his feeble health forbade him. He arrived from Switzerland in the spring of 1781, and hastening to his friend Ireland, at Brislington, met there Rankin, who had returned from America. They had not seen each other for more than ten years. "His looks, his salutation, and his address," says Rankin, "struck me with a mixture of wonder, solemnity, and joy." They retired into Ireland's garden, where they could converse with more freedom. Fletcher then began to inquire concerning the work of God in America, and Rankin's labours during the five years he had spent there. Rankin gave him a full account of every thing that he wished to know. While he was giving this statement, Fletcher stopped him six times under the shade of the trees, and broke out into prayer to God for the prosperity of the American brethren. "He appeared," says Rankin, "to be as deeply interested in behalf of our suffering friends as if they had been his own flock at Madeley. He several times called upon me, also, to commend them to God in prayer. This was an hour never to be forgotten by me while memory remains."†

Fletcher was present with Wesley and Coke at the Leeds Conference of 1784, and there, with his assistance,‡ the question was brought to an issue. Wesley had previously consulted with Coke respecting it. He represented to Coke, that as the Revolution had separated the United States from the mother country, and the Episcopal Establishment was utterly abolished in the states, it became his duty, as providentially at the head of the Methodist societies, to obey their demand, and furnish for them the means of grace. He referred to the example of the Alexandrian Church, which, at the death of its bishops, provided their successors through ordination by its presbyters—a historical fact exemplified during

* Works, vol. xiii.

† Benson's Life of Fletcher, chap. 7.

‡ Coke's Letter to Wesley, Smith's History of Wesleyan Methodism, vol. i. book ii. chap. v. 1862.

two hundred years. Recognized as their founder by the American Methodists, required by them to provide for their new necessities, and unable to induce the English prelates to do so, he proposed to ordain Coke, that he might go to the American societies as their superintendent or bishop, ordain their preachers, and thus afford them the sacraments with the least possible irregularity. Coke hesitated, but in two months wrote to Wesley accepting the office.* Accordingly, accompanied by Rev. James Creighton, a presbyter of the Church of England, Coke met him at Bristol, and on the second of September, 1784, was ordained *superintendent or bishop of the Methodist societies in America;* an act of as high propriety and dignity as it was of urgent necessity. Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey were at the same time ordained presbyters; and on the third of November, attended by his two presbyters (the number necessary to assist a bishop in ordination, according to the usages of the English Church), Coke arrived in the Republic, and proceeded to ordain Francis Asbury, first as a deacon, then as a presbyter, and finally as a bishop, and to settle the organization of American Methodism, one of the most important ecclesiastical events (whether for good or evil) of the eighteenth century, or indeed since the Reformation, as its historical consequences attest.

The Colonial English Church being dissolved by the Revolution, its dwindled fragments were yet floating, as had been the Methodist societies, on the stormy tide of events. Methodism preceded it in reorganization. The Methodist bishops were the first Protestant bishops, and Methodism was the first Protestant Episcopal Church of the New World; and as Wesley had given it the Anglican Articles of Religion, (omitting the seventeenth, on Predestination,) and the Liturgy, wisely abridged, it became, both by its precedent organization and its subsequent numerical importance, the real successor to the Anglican Church in America.

Of course this extraordinary but necessary measure met with opposition from Charles Wesley. He still retained his High Church opinions; he denounced the ordinations as schism; with his usual haste he predicted that Coke would return from "his Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore" to "make us all Dissenters here." The poet was no legislator; he became pathetic in his remonstrances to his brother; "alas!" he wrote, "what trouble are you preparing for yourself, as well as for me, and for your oldest, truest, best friends! Before you have quite broken down the bridge, stop and consider! If your sons have no regard

* Drew's Life of Coke, chap. 5.

for you, have some for yourself. Go to your grave in peace; at least suffer me to go first, before this ruin is under your hand." He did soon after go to his grave in peace, except the alarms of his imaginary fears, and the only evidence of the predicted "ruin" is seen to-day in the prevalent and permanent success of Methodism in both hemispheres.

The next year after the ordination of Coke, Wesley records in his Journal: "I was now considering how strangely the grain of mustard-seed, planted about fifty years ago, has grown up. It spread through all Great Britain and Ireland, the Isle of Wight, and the Isle of Man; then to America, through the whole continent into Canada, the Leeward Islands, and Newfoundland. And the societies in all these parts walk by one rule, knowing religion is holy tempers, and striving to worship God, not in form only, but likewise in spirit and in truth." His policy becomes more and more liberal as he now finds it necessary to fortify his cause before his approaching death. The following year (1786) he ordained six or seven more preachers, sending some to Scotland, and others to the West Indies,* but he ordained none as yet for England, where he and his clerical friends could partially supply the sacraments. Three years later he ordained Mather, Rankin, and Moore.† About a score of lay preachers received ordination from his hands, and for no other purpose but that they might administer the sacraments in cases of necessity.

Thus did providential events give shape and security to Methodism, as its aged leader approached his end.

* Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 25.

† "To administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper according to the usages of the Church of England," says the certificate of ordination, (see it in Life of Henry Moore, p. 134, Am. ed.;) and yet a living Churchman (Dr. Pusey's Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, p. 151) says, that "Wesley reluctantly took the step of ordaining at all;" and that "to the last *he refused, in the strongest terms, his consent that those thus ordained should take upon them to administer the sacraments.* He felt that it exceeded his powers, and so inhibited it, however it might diminish the numbers of the society he had formed." The biographers of Wilberforce (vol. i. p. 248) also say: "Nor were any of his preachers *suffered during his lifetime to attempt to administer the sacraments of his Church.*" It is high time that such fictions should cease among English Churchmen. It seems that they have yet to learn how thorough and noble a heretic Wesley really was.

CHAPTER VII.

DID WESLEY DESIGN, BY HIS ORDINATION OF COKE, TO CONFER ON HIM THE OFFICE OF A BISHOP, AND TO CONSTITUTE THE AMERICAN METHODIST SOCIETIES AN EPISCOPAL CHURCH?

The Question stated—Preliminaries of the Argument—Wesley's Opinions on Church Government—The Argument as deduced from the Records and Incidents of Coke's Ordination, and of the Organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church—Summary View of the Argument—Its demonstrative Result—Providential Expediency of the Title of Bishop among the American Methodists.

No act of Wesley's public life has been more misrepresented, if not misunderstood, than his ordination of Coke, and the consequent episcopal organization of his American societies. Churchmen, so called, have especially insisted that he did not design to confer upon Coke the character of a bishop; that Coke's new office was designed to be a species of supervisory appointment, vague and contingent—something widely different from episcopacy, however difficult to define; and that, therefore, the distinct existence of American Methodism as an episcopal church, is a fact contrary to the intention of Wesley.

No extant forensic argument, founded upon documentary evidence, is stronger than would be a right collocation of the evidence which sustains the claim of American Methodism respecting this question. All Methodist authorities, British as well as American, support that claim; its proofs have been more or less cited again and again, but they have not usually been drawn out in detail. Presented in their right series they become absolutely decisive, and must conclude the controversy with all candid minds. It is appropriate at this point of our narrative to review the argument. In stating the facts which compose it, in their successive relations one to another, some repetition will be necessary; but the highest logic—mathematical demonstration itself—is that in which not only the postulates, but the successive proofs, most often recur to strengthen the advancing demonstration.

It has been seen that, as before the American Revolution the two countries were under one government, the two Methodist bodies were also. Wesley's "Minutes" were the Discipline of the American as well as the British Methodist; and Asbury represented his person in America, vested with much greater powers than have since belonged to the American Methodist bishops. Thus was the American Church governed for years, by the paternal direction of Wesley. It has been further shown that, as none of the American preachers were ordained, the societies were dependent for the sacraments upon the clergy of the English Church in the colonies; that at the Revolution most of these left the country, and the Methodists were thereby deprived of those means of grace; that many societies insisted upon having them without ordination; that a general strife ensued, and a large portion of the Southern societies revolted; that a compromise was effected until they could apply to Wesley for powers to ordain and to administer the sacraments; and that, in meeting their demand, he ordained and sent over Dr. Coke with episcopal powers, under the name of superintendent, to ordain Francis Asbury a "joint superintendent," and to ordain the preachers to the offices of deacons and elders. He sent also a printed liturgy, or "Sunday Service," containing, besides the usual prayers, forms for "ordaining superintendents, elders, and deacons," the "Articles of Religion," and "A Collection of Psalms and Hymns." Coke also bore from him a circular letter to the societies, stating reasons for the new measures, the chief reason being the demand of the American societies. When Coke arrived, the preachers assembled in Baltimore to receive him and the new arrangements borne by him from Wesley. The adoption of the provisions thus made by Wesley, at the request of "some thousands of the inhabitants of these states," is what is called the "organization" of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The "Minutes," which had before been the law of the Church, were continued, with such additions as were required by these new arrangements. There was no revolution of the Church polity, and no new powers were imparted to Asbury, except authority to ordain. Every thing proceeded as before, except that the Methodist societies no longer depended upon the Church of England for the sacraments, but received them from their own preachers. Thus, then, it appears that the so-called "organization" of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Baltimore, was simply and substantially the adoption of the system appointed by Wesley. In respect to the very term "episcopal" itself, the Conference of Baltimore said, in their "Minutes" of the so-called organization, that,

"following the counsel of Mr. John Wesley, *who recommended the episcopal mode* of Church government, we thought it best to become an episcopal Church."* The Minutes containing this declaration were, six months after, in the hands of Wesley, and were published in England without a word of disapprobation from him; and when Coke was attacked in the London papers for his proceedings at Baltimore, he publicly defended himself by declaring that he had "done nothing without the direction of Mr. Wesley;" this he did in English journals under the eye of Wesley.†

It should be frankly admitted, however, that Wesley, while he established the American episcopacy, did not approve the use of the title of "bishop," because of the adventitious dignities associated with it. But let it be borne in mind that the American societies had been in existence nearly four years under the express title of an "Episcopal Church," with the uninterrupted approbation of Wesley, before the name bishop was personally applied to their superintendents.‡ Not till this term was so applied did he demur. He then wrote a letter to Bishop Asbury, objecting strongly to his being "called a bishop."§ And it is on this letter, more than any thing else, that the opponents of Methodism have founded their allegation that Wesley did not design to establish the American Methodist episcopacy, but that Coke and the Baltimore Conference exceeded his intentions in assuming it. Quotations from this letter have been incessantly given, in a form adapted only to produce a false effect, for the letter can be rightly comprehended only by the aid of the historical facts of the case.

Did Wesley, then, design, by his ordination of Coke, to confer on him the office of a bishop, and to constitute the American Metho-

* Minutes of 1785, in Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the M. E. Church, vol. i. page 22. New York, 1840.

† Drew's Life of Coke, chap. 6. His assailant is supposed to have been Charles Wesley.

‡ It had been used, however, all this time, in the Minutes, as explanatory of the word "superintendent." The Minutes say that, "following the counsel of Mr. John Wesley, who recommended the episcopal mode of Church government, we thought it best to become an episcopal Church, making the episcopal office elective, and the elected superintendent, or *bishop*, amenable to the body of ministers and preachers."—Minutes, vol. i. page 22. New York, 1840.

§ In his letter to Asbury, he says: "One instance of this, your greatness, has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you, suffer yourself to be called Bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought! Men may call me a knave or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never, by my consent, call me *Bishop!* For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this!"—Letter 730, Works, vol. xiii.

dist societies an episcopal Church? Three things are to be assumed as preliminary to this inquiry:

1. That Wesley was a decided Episcopalian. What man was ever more attached to the national episcopacy of England? We have already cited proofs that he believed the "episcopal form of Church government to be Scriptural and apostolical," that is, "well agreeing with the practice and writings of the apostles;" though that it is prescribed in Scripture he did not believe.

2. That Wesley, while he believed in episcopacy, belonged to that class of Episcopalians who contend that episcopacy is not a distinct order, but a distinct office, in the ministry; that bishops and presbyters, or elders, are of the same order, and have essentially the same prerogatives; but that, for convenience, some of this order may be raised to the episcopal office, and some of the functions originally pertaining to the whole order, as ordination, for example, may be confined to them; the presbyter thus elevated being but *primus inter pares*—the first among equals—a presiding officer.*

3. That the words *episcopos*, *superintendent*, and *bishop*,† have the same meaning, namely, an overseer.

With these preliminaries, we recur to the questions, Did Wesley appoint Coke to the episcopal office? Did he establish the American Methodist episcopacy? Let us look at the evidence.

1. Wesley mentions, in Coke's certificate of ordination, as a reason for ordaining him, that the Methodists in America desired "still to adhere to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England."‡ That Church in America was dissolved by the Revolution; he therefore appointed Coke, with an episcopal form of government, a ritual, and articles of religion, to meet the exigency. If Coke was appointed merely to some such indefinite and contingent supervisory office as "Church" writers allege, if he possessed not the authoritative functions of episcopacy, wherein did his appointment answer the purpose mentioned by Wesley—"the discipline of the Church of England?" Wherein consists the main feature of the discipline of the English Church? In its episcopal superintendence. Wherein does American Methodism resemble it? Certainly not in class-meetings, itinerancy, and other characteristic peculiarities, but in its episcopal regimen. Wesley's language is without sense if this is not its meaning.

* See his circular letter to the American Societies, Drew's Coke, chap. 5.

† Bishop (Saxon, *bischop*) is a corruption of the Latinized Greek word *episcopus*. Its analogy to the second and third syllables of the latter is obvious.

‡ Drew's Life of Coke, chap. 5.

2. Why did Wesley attach so much importance to the appointment if it was of the secondary character alleged? He says in his circular letter respecting Coke's ordination: "For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right by ordaining part of our travelling preachers; but I have still refused, not only for peace' sake, but because I was determined as little as possible to violate the established order of the national Church to which I belonged. But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, neither any parish ministers; so that, for some hundred miles together, there are none either to baptize or administer the Lord's Supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end!"

Scruples! What could have been his "scruples" about sending Coke on such a secondary errand as the opponents of the Methodist episcopacy assert? He had already sent Asbury and others to America, and to Asbury he had actually assigned such a special yet secondary office, but unaccompanied with the ordination and authority of episcopacy. This he had done years before, without any scruple whatever; but during all this time he had been scrupling about this new and solemn measure, till the Revolution relieved him by abolishing the jurisdiction of the English bishops in the colonies. There is certainly sheer absurdity in all this, if Wesley merely gave to Coke and Asbury a sort of indefinite though special commission in the American Church, not including in it the distinctive functions of episcopacy. We can conceive of nothing in the nature of such a commission to excite such scruples—a commission which had long since been given to Asbury.

Again, when Wesley proposed to Coke his ordination to this new office, some six or seven months before it was conferred, Coke "was startled at a measure so unprecedented in modern days," and doubted Wesley's authority to ordain him, as Wesley himself was not a bishop.* Wesley recommended him to read Lord King's Primitive Church, and gave him time to reflect. Coke passed two months in Scotland, and, on satisfying his doubts, wrote to Wesley accepting the appointment, and was afterward ordained, with solemn forms and the imposition of hands by Wesley, assisted by presbyters of the Church of England. What could have possibly been the pertinency of all these former scruples of Wesley, this surprise, and doubt, and delay of Coke, this reference to ecclesiastical antiquity, and to a book which demonstrates the right of presbyters to ordain

* Drew's Life of Coke, chap. 5.

bishops in given cases, and these solemn forms, if they related merely to the alleged species of appointment, especially as this very species of commission had already existed for some years in the person of Asbury?

3. It is evident, beyond all question, that Wesley did not consider this solemn act in the subordinate sense of an appointment, but as an "ordination," using the word in its strictest ecclesiastical application. In his circular letter he says: "For many years I have been importuned . . . to exercise this right, by *ordaining* part of our travelling preachers; but I have still refused . . . because I was determined as little as possible to violate the established order of the national Church. . . . Here my scruples are at an end." Here the word ordaining is expressly used; and if the new appointment was not a regular "ordination," but a species of nondescript commission, solemnized by the mere forms of ordination, how could it be an interference with the "established order of the national Church?" How, especially, could it be such an interference, in any important sense different from that which Wesley had already, for years, been exercising without "scruple," in sending to America his ordained preachers? It was clearly an ordination, in the ecclesiastical sense of the term; but there have been only three ordinations claimed in the Christian world; namely, to the offices of, 1. Deacons; 2. Elders or presbyters; and, 3. Bishops. If, then, Coke was ordained by Wesley, and was not ordained a bishop, it becomes at once a pertinent but unanswerable question, to what was he ordained? He had been a presbyter for years. To what, then, did Wesley ordain him, if not to the next recognized office?

Let it be remembered that Whatcoat and Vasey were ordained elders for America at the time of Coke's ordination, but by a distinct act. If Coke did not receive a higher ordination (that is, episcopal, for this is the only higher one), why was he ordained separately from them, though on the same occasion? And why did Wesley, in his circular letter, declare to the American Methodists, that while Whatcoat and Vasey were "to act as elders among them," Coke and Asbury were "to be joint superintendents over them?"

4. Wesley, in his circular letter, appeals to Lord King's Sketch of the Primitive Church, to show that he, as a presbyter, had a right, under his peculiar circumstances, to perform these ordinations. Lord King establishes the second of the above preliminary statements, and the right of presbyters to ordain. And Wesley cites

particularly his reference to the Alexandrian Church, where, on the decease of a bishop, the presbyters ordained his successor.

Why now this reference to Lord King and the Alexandrian Church—proving that presbyters could ordain—in justification of Wesley's proceedings, if he did not ordain? And, if he did ordain Coke, it may again be asked, as Coke was already a presbyter, to what was he thus ordained, if it was not to the only remaining office—the episcopacy? And still more pointedly may it be asked, what propriety was there in Wesley's justifying himself by referring to the ordination of bishops by the presbyters of Alexandria, if he himself had not ordained a bishop?

5. Wesley prepared at this time a Prayer Book for the American Church—an abridgment of the English Liturgy—to be used under the new arrangement. It contains the forms for the ordination of, 1. Deacons; 2. Elders; 3. Superintendents; and directs expressly that all preachers elected to the office of deacon, elder, or superintendent, shall be presented to the superintendent "to be ordained." Let it be remarked then, 1. That here the very word ordain is used. 2. We have here the three distinct offices of the ministry stated in order, according to the understanding of Wesley, and of all Episcopalians throughout the world. 3. That not only is the name of bishop changed to that of superintendent, but the name of presbyter, or priest, to that of elder—the new names being in both cases precisely synonymous with the old ones. If the change of the former name implies a difference in the office also, why does not the change in the latter imply the same? 4. These forms of ordination were taken from the forms in the English Liturgy for the ordination of deacons, presbyters, and bishops, the names of the latter two being changed to synonymous terms, namely elders and superintendents. The opponents of the Methodist episcopacy readily grant that elder means presbyter, yet, as soon as superintendents are mentioned as bishops, they protest. 5. These forms show that Wesley not only created the Methodist episcopacy, but designed it to continue after Coke and Asbury's decease; they were printed for permanent use.

6. By reading Coke's letter to Wesley, consenting to and directing about his proposed ordination, it will be seen that Whatcoat and Vasey were ordained presbyters at Coke's request, because "propriety and universal practice," he says, "make it expedient that I should have two presbyters with me in this work."* That is, Coke requests, and Wesley grants, that two presbyters shall be ordained to accompany Coke in his new office, because "propriety and universal

* Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i. book ii. chap. v. p. 510: 1862.

practice" require that two presbyters assist a bishop in ordaining; and yet Coke was not appointed to the office of a bishop! Coke in this letter, let it be repeated, requests that these two men should be made "presbyters;" Wesley complies; and yet, in the forms of the Prayer-Book, or Discipline, they are called "elders." The name only was changed, therefore, not the thing; why, then, is not the inference just that the other change in these forms, that of bishop to superintendent, is only in the name, not in the thing? The rule certainly ought to "work both ways."

7. Charles Wesley was a rigid High Churchman, and opposed to all ordinations by his brother. The latter knew his views so well that he would not expose the present measure to interruption by acquainting him with it till it was consummated. Though Charles Wesley was a presbyter of the Church of England, and in the town at the time, yet other presbyters were summoned to meet the demand of "propriety and universal practice" on such occasions, while he was carefully avoided. Now, why this remarkable precaution against the High-Church prejudices of his brother respecting ordinations, if he did not in these proceedings ordain? If it be replied, that Charles was not only opposed to his brother's ordaining a bishop, but equally to his ordaining to the other offices of the ministry, and therefore the ordinations might have been confined to the latter, and yet such precautions be proper; it may then be asked again, how can we suppose Coke to be now ordained to these lower offices when he had already received them, and exercised them for years?

8. As soon as Charles Wesley learned these proceedings he was profoundly afflicted. His correspondence with his brother* shows that he understood them in the manner that the American Methodists do, and Wesley never corrected this interpretation. He defends himself, but never denies the facts. Charles Wesley speaks of Coke's "Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore," alluding to the name assumed by the American Church at its organization in that city. Wesley, in his reply, utters not a word in denial or disapproval of this title, but simply vindicates the necessity of his course in respect to the American Methodists. Charles Wesley, in response, speaks of the doctor's "ambition" and "rashness." Wesley, though he knew the Church had been organized at Baltimore with the title of "Episcopal," and had used the very word "bishop," but not as a personal title, says: "I believe Dr. Coke as free from ambition as from covetousness. He has done nothing

* Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 25.

rashly that I know." Charles Wesley, in his letter to Dr. Chandler, a clergyman about to sail for America, speaks of his brother having "assumed the episcopal character, ordained elders, *consecrated a bishop*, and sent him to ordain our lay preachers in America;" showing thus what the office really was, though the name was changed. Evidently it was only the appellation of bishop, applied to the superintendents in person, that Wesley disapproved.

9. The Conference at which the Church was organized terminated January 1, 1785. The Minutes were published by Coke with the title, "General Minutes of the Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America." The Minutes, as has been stated, expressly say that the American societies were formed into an Episcopal Church, and this, too, at the "recommendation" of Wesley. By July, Coke was with Wesley at the British Conference. By the 26th of the preceding June, his own Journal, containing this phrase, was inspected by Wesley. Coke also took to England the American Minutes, and they were printed on a press which Wesley used, and under his own eye. The Baltimore proceedings were therefore known to Wesley, but we hear of no remonstrance from him. They soon became known, by the Minutes, to the public; and when Coke was attacked in a newspaper for what he had done, he replied, as we have seen, through the press, that "he had done nothing but under the direction of Mr. Wesley." Wesley never denied it. How are all these facts explicable on the supposition that Coke and Asbury had ambitiously broken through Wesley's restrictions?

10. One of Charles Wesley's greatest fears was, as we have noticed, that the English preachers would be ordained by Coke. He had prevailed upon his brother to refuse them ordination for years. He now writes, with deep concern, that "not a preacher in London would refuse orders from the doctor." "He comes armed with your authority to make us all Dissenters." Now, why all this sudden disposition of the English preachers to receive "orders from the doctor," if it was not understood that he had received episcopal powers, and they despaired of ever getting ordination from the national bishops? If it is replied, they believed, with Wesley, that, under necessary circumstances, presbyters could ordain, and therefore desired it from Coke, not in view of his new appointment, but because he was a presbyter of the Church of England, then it may be properly asked, why did they not seek it before, for Coke had been a presbyter among them for years? Why start up with such a demand all at once, as soon as they learned of the new position of

Coke? And how could Charles Wesley say, in this case, "He comes armed with your authority?" for his authority as a presbyter he obtained from a bishop of the English Church years before he knew Wesley.

11. The term bishop was not personally applied in the Discipline to the American superintendents till about three years after the "organization" of the Church, and Wesley's objurgatory letter to Asbury was not written till four years after it. During all this interval, however, the American societies were called an "Episcopal Church." Six months after adopting the name, its Minutes were, as stated, inspected by Wesley, and published under his auspices; they were called the "Minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America;" and they expressly declare that, "following the counsel of Mr. John Wesley, who recommended the episcopal mode of Church government, we thought it best to become an Episcopal Church;" yet, as has been shown, during this long interim Wesley never uttered a syllable against this assumption! When his brother writes him, accusing Coke of rashness, he replies that "the doctor has done nothing rashly;" and when Coke is accused in the London prints, he declares, under Wesley's eye and without contradiction, that "he had done nothing without the direction of Mr. Wesley." What, now, do all these incidents imply? What but that Wesley did approve the American episcopacy—that it was established by his direction? Yet, four years after, when the appellation of bishop was applied personally to the American *episcopoi*, this letter of Wesley was written. What further does this imply? What but that it was not the thing he condemned, but the name; the thing had existed for years uncondemned, nay, defended by him; the very name "Episcopal," so far as it applied to the Church collectively, he did not condemn; but the personal title of bishop he disapproved, because of its objectionable associations. Is it possible to escape this conclusion?

Thus we see that, whatever view we take of the subject, we are compelled to one conclusion: that Wesley did create and establish the American Methodist episcopacy. The man who gainsays such evidence must be given up as incorrigible. There can be no reasoning with him.

And now, what is the sum of this evidence? It has already been presented with sufficient detail; but let us retrace the successive and decisive steps of the argument. Here we have Wesley proposing to establish "the discipline of the Church of England" among the American Methodists, and to do so he ordains for them bishops,

and gives them an episcopal regimen; yet, according to their antagonists, he never designed them to be a distinct Church, but only a "society" in the Protestant Episcopal Church! Wesley and Coke have "scruples," delays, references to antiquity, imposition of hands, and other solemn forms, conforming to the "universal practice" of episcopal ordination; and yet all concerning some nondescript kind of appointment, analogous to that which is conferred upon a missionary in charge over his brethren in a foreign station! Wesley speaks of it as "ordaining," and of his refusing to use the right before the Revolution, because it would have interfered with the "established order of the national Church;" and yet a mere secondary commission of Coke, such an one as had existed in the person of Asbury for years, is the momentous interference with the established order of the national Church—though there was nothing in that order with which it could interfere, the national Church never having had any such appointments! Wesley solemnly "ordains" Coke; and yet it is not to the episcopal office, though he had been ordained to all the other offices to which ordination is appropriate, years before! Wesley ordains two other men to the office of elders, and at the same time separately and formally ordains Coke, who had already borne this office; but still Coke's new office is not the only remaining one that could be conferred upon him! Wesley refers to the ordination of bishops by the presbyters of Alexandria, in justification of his ordination of Coke, and yet he does not ordain Coke a bishop! Wesley prepares for the American Church a prayer-book, abridged from that of the Church of England, prescribing the English forms for the three offices of deacons, presbyters, and bishops; the two former are allowed unquestionably to be what they are in England, and yet the latter is explained into something new and anomalous, answering to nothing ever heard of in the Church of England, or in any other episcopal Church! In these forms the old names of two of the offices are changed to new but synonymous appellations, that of presbyter or priest to elder, that of bishop to superintendent; in the former case the change of the name is not for a moment supposed to imply a change of the thing; and yet, in the other case, the change of the name invalidates entirely the thing, without a particle more evidence for it in the one case than in the other! Charles Wesley, being a High Churchman, is kept unaware of his brother's proceedings till they are accomplished, though he is in the town at the time of the ordination; and yet it is no ordination, but a species of appointment against which he could have had no episcopal prejudice whatever! When he learns the facts he is

overwhelmed with surprise, and in his correspondence exclaims against his "brother's consecration of a bishop," and "Dr. Coke's Methodist Episcopal Church" at Baltimore; and Wesley, in his replies, never denies these titles, but simply vindicates his ordinations, and says that Coke had "done nothing rashly;" yet there was no bishop, no episcopal office appointed, no distinct episcopal Church established, but Coke had fabricated the whole! When the preachers in England, trained under episcopacy, hear of Coke's new office, they are, to the great alarm of Charles Wesley, suddenly seized with a desire to be ordained by Coke, though they fully know that he is no bishop, but the same presbyter that he had been among them for years! In six months after the organization of the American Church, Coke publishes its Minutes, with the title, "Methodist Episcopal Church in America," in London, under the eye of Wesley; and in these Minutes it is declared that Wesley "recommended the episcopal mode of Church government;" but no remonstrance is heard from Wesley! When Coke is condemned in the public prints for his proceedings, he publicly replies that he had done "nothing without the direction of Mr. Wesley;" no rebuke follows from Wesley, but Coke goes on as usual, presiding in his Conferences, and maintained in his new position; and yet his American proceedings were an ambitious plot, contrary to the will of Wesley! The American Methodists had borne the title "Episcopal Church," with Wesley's full approval, for four years, when, on the use of the personal title of bishop, Wesley writes his letter to Asbury; and yet it is not the mere personal title he condemns, but the office which, for four years, he had left uncondemned, nay, had vindicated!

And now, looking again at this series of arguments, will not the American Methodists be acquitted of presumption when they assume that they may here make a triumphant stand, surrounded by evidence accumulated and impregnable? The noble ecclesiastical system under which it has pleased God to give them and their families spiritual shelter and fellowship with his saints, and whose efficiency has surprised the Christian world, is not, as their opponents would represent, an imposition of their preachers, and contrary to the wishes of Wesley, but was legitimately received from his hands as the providential founder of Methodism.

If Wesley's strong repugnance to the mere name of bishop had been expressed before its adoption by the American Church, it would probably not have been adopted. Still the American Church was now a separate organization, and was at perfect liberty to

dissent from Wesley on a matter of mere expediency. The Church thought it had good reasons to use the name. The American Methodists were mostly of English origin. The people of their country among whom Methodism was most successful, were either from England or of immediate English descent, and had been educated to consider episcopacy a wholesome and apostolical government of the Church. The Church approved and had the office, why not, then, have the name? especially as, without the name, the office itself would be liable to lose, in the eyes of the people, its peculiar character, and thereby fail in that appeal to their long established opinions which Methodism had a right, both from principal and expediency, to make? The English Establishment having been dissolved in this country, and the Protestant Episcopalians not being yet organized on an independent basis, and the episcopal organization of the Methodists having preceded that of the Protestant Episcopalians, the Methodist Church had a clear right to present itself to the American public as competent to aid in supplying the place of the abolished Establishment, having the same essential principles without its peculiar defects.

May not the circumstance of the assumption of an episcopal character, nominally as well as really, by the American Methodists, be considered providential? Episcopacy, both in America and England, has reached an excess of presumption and arrogance. The moderate party, once declared by Bishop White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, to include a large majority of American Episcopalians,* has nearly disappeared. Was it not providential, under these circumstances, that a body of Christians should appear, exceeding every other in success, and nominally and practically bearing an episcopal character, without any of its presumptuous pretensions? Amid the uncharitable assumptions of prelatical Episcopalians, the Methodist Episcopal Church stands forth a monument of the laborious and simple episcopacy of the early ages; its success, as well as its humility, contrasting it signally with its more pretentious but feeble sister. It has thus practically vindicated episcopacy as an expedient form of ecclesiastical government, and assuredly it needs vindication in these days.

Such, then, is the evidence which should, with all men of self-respectful candour, conclude decisively the question of Wesley's design and agency in the organization of American Methodism.

Driven from this ground, objectors retreat to an equally untenable one, by alleging that the episcopal organization of the societies in

* Case of the Prot. Episc. Church in the United States, &c., p. 25.

America is to be attributed to the influence of ambitious counsellors over Wesley, in the imbecility of his old age. It has already been shown that he as yet betrayed no such imbecility; but it has still more conclusively been demonstrated that the ecclesiastical opinions which sanction this great act, were adopted in the prime of his manhood. They were the well-considered and fully demonstrated convictions of two score years, before he yielded to the unavoidable necessity of giving them practical effect. Few facts in the history of Methodism are more interesting and instructive than the gradual development of Wesley's own mind and character under his extraordinary and accumulating responsibilities; it has therefore been studiously traced throughout the preceding pages. No reader who has followed this narrative will need an additional word in refutation of this last objection to the American Methodist episcopacy, and no possible ground of argument remains for its opponents but the prelatical charge against its legitimacy, founded in the traditional and exploded ecclesiasticism of obsolete ages. Methodists are content, with Wesley, to pronounce the apostolic succession "a fable which no man ever did, or ever can prove," and believe that, in this age, they need not anxiously challenge any advantage which their opponents can claim from a pretension so incompatible alike with the letter and the charity of the Gospel, as well as with the Christian enlightenment of modern times.*

* Wesley was in good company among Churchmen in his denunciation of the "fable" of the succession. Chillingworth said, "I am fully persuaded there hath been no such succession." Bishop Stillingfleet declares that "this succession is as muddy as the Tiber itself." Bishop Hoadley asserts: "It hath not pleased God, in his providence, to keep up any proof of the least probability, or moral possibility, of a regular uninterrupted succession; but there is a great appearance, and, humanly speaking, a certainty, to the contrary, that the succession hath often been interrupted." Archbishop Whately says, "there is not a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up, with approach to certainty, his spiritual pedigree."

CHAPTER VIII.

LABOURS OF WESLEY FROM 1785 TO 1790.

Wesley itinerating in Extreme Age—Field Preaching—Howard, the Philanthropist—Scenes of Itinerancy—Wesley's last Northern Tour—His Power in the Pulpit continues—Last Scenes at Newcastle—Wesley in his Eighty-eighth Year—Crabbe the Poet.

WESLEY had fortified his cause against the day of his death, by the important measures reviewed in the last two chapters. We turn from these great deeds to follow him in his itinerant labours, during the last half of this decade, with increased, with inexpressible interest—an interest which the historian must feel to be legitimate to his narrative, and yet perilous to its credibility with readers who do not turn from his pages to his original authorities. Larger congregations than ever throng to hear the wonderful old man, for already it is seen that he is one of the great characters of history: and the long-tested purity and philanthropy of his life; his ability; his usefulness, imprinted on most of the geography of the realm; and his persistent travels and preaching, at an age when most men sink into dotage or the grave, are a marvel if not a miracle to the popular mind. Every day his voice is still heard somewhere "sounding the alarm" at five o'clock in the morning: nearly every evening the sun goes down upon him in some other place, after labours which most clergymen would deem the sufficient work of a week. He has chapels of his own scattered over the whole country, and the national churches are now frequently and with eagerness thrown open to him; but he is still almost daily proclaiming his message in the fields and on the highways to masses which no building in the United Kingdom could accommodate. Field-preaching was still his boast for Methodism; he had no more disposition to abandon it himself, or to have his followers abandon it after his death, at least while any considerable number of the people came not to the churches, than a veteran general would be disposed to abandon the open "campaign," in which he had won his laurels, to fight, the rest of his life, cooped up within the straitened limits of fortresses.

On completing his eighty-second year (1785) he records, as we have seen, no symptom of old age except his gray hairs; he has not

known even "weariness" for eleven years. The next year he is "still a wonder to himself;" he is "never tired either with writing, preaching, or travelling." In 1787 he forgets to speak of himself on his birthday; he speaks only of another—a congenial mind whom the world still recognizes as his fellow-representative of the best spirit of those times, and whose name has the peculiar and enviable fate of being distinguishable to his countrymen, only by the noblest affix. Howard, "the philanthropist," called upon him in Ireland. They were ardent friends; how could Wesley and the great Dissenter have been any thing else?

Howard turned not aside, in his missions of mercy, to see any curiosities of nature or art, not even the Coliseum when in Rome; but the great Methodist he could not pass. At his visit to Wesley the present year, the latter pronounced him, in his Journal, "one of the greatest men in Europe." "Nothing but the mighty power of God," he adds, "can enable him to go through his difficult and dangerous employments." He went from Dublin to Londonderry, where he sought out an eminent friend of Wesley, who says: "He came to see me, because he understood I was Mr. Wesley's friend: he began immediately to speak of him; he told me he had seen him shortly before in Dublin; that he had spent some hours with him, and was greatly edified by his conversation. 'I was encouraged by him,' he said, 'to go on vigorously with my own designs: I saw in him how much a single man might achieve by zeal and perseverance; and I thought, why may not I do as much in my way as Mr. Wesley has done in his, if I am only as assiduous and persevering? and I determined I would pursue my work with more alacrity than ever.'" *

With so many public advantages clearly attributable to Methodism, it may seem unnecessary to ascribe to it any of the usefulness of this remarkable man's life and example; but he has himself made the acknowledgment even more directly than in these allusions. Subsequently to this interview, before leaving England for his last and fatal visit to the Continent, he called to take leave of Wesley at City Road Chapel parsonage, "carrying his last quarto upon the

* Alexander Knox, Esq. See Moore's Life. "I cannot quit this subject," says Knox, "without observing that, excepting Mr. Wesley, no man ever gave me a more perfect idea of angelic goodness than Mr. Howard: his whole conversation exhibited a most interesting tissue of exalted piety, meek simplicity, and glowing charity. His striking adieu I shall never forget. 'Farewell, sir,' said he, 'when we meet again may it be in heaven, or farther on our way to it.' Precious man, may your prayer be answered! 'May my soul be with thine!'"

jails under his arm." Wesley was absent, but the philanthropist must stay and talk an hour with Henry Moore about his old friend and his own projects. He "delightfully called to mind the former days when he had first heard Wesley at his seat in Bedfordshire, and well recollected the discourse which made the first impression on his mind." The text was, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest," Eccl. ix. 10. "I have," added Howard, "but one thing to do, and I strive to do it with my might. The Lord has taken away whatever might have been an encumbrance: all places are alike to me, for I find misery in all. . . . Present my respects and love to Mr. Wesley; tell him I had hoped to have seen him once more: perhaps we may meet again in this world, but if not, we shall meet, I trust, in a better."*

On his next birthday Wesley first records symptoms of old age: "I this day enter on my eighty-fifth year. How little have I suffered yet, by 'the rush of numerous years?'" But he acknowledges that he is not as agile as formerly. He cannot walk as fast as he did; his sight is a little decayed; his left eye has grown dim, and hardly serves him to read; he has daily some pain in the ball of his right eye, as also in his right temple (occasioned by a blow received some months before), and in his right shoulder and arm, which he imputes partly to a sprain, and partly to rheumatism. He finds also some decay in his memory, with regard to names and things lately past; but not at all with regard to what he had read or heard, twenty, forty, or sixty years before; neither does he find any change in his hearing, smell, taste, or appetite, though he needs but a third part of the food he once used; nor does he feel any weariness either in travelling or preaching; and he is not conscious of any decay in writing sermons, which he does as readily, and, he believes, as correctly as ever. "To what cause," he asks, "can I impute this, that I am as I am? First, doubtless to the power of God fitting me for the work to which I am called, as long as he pleases to continue me therein; and next, subordinately to this, to the prayers of his children." He mentions also "inferior means:" his early rising; having sleep always at command, for "he called it and it came day or night;" his constant travels; and his preaching at five in the morning for more than fifty years.

The next year decay comes on apace. He enters on his eighty-

* Life of Rev. Henry Moore. Moore adds: "We hung upon his lips delighted: such a picture of love, simplicity, and cheerfulness we have seldom seen."

sixth year. "I now find I grow old," he says. His sight is decayed; he cannot read a small print unless in a strong light. His strength is diminished; so that he walks much slower than had been usual with him, for his motions had always been rapid, and arrested the attention of spectators in the streets, as of a man intent on some important errand. His memory of names, whether of persons or places, is enfeebled; he must stop a little to recollect them. "What I should be afraid of," he adds, "is, if I took thought for the morrow, that my body should weigh down my mind, and create either stubbornness, by the decrease of my understanding, or peevishness, by the increase of bodily infirmities; but thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God."

On the first day of 1790 he writes: "I am now an old man, decayed from head to foot." His eyes are dim; his right hand shakes much; his mouth is hot and dry every morning; he has a lingering fever almost every day; his motion is weak and slow. "However, blessed be God!" he says, "I do not slack my labour; I can preach and write still."

During these latter five years his labours scarcely suffer diminution. He seems disposed to take advantage of his enlarged congregations, and the increased popular interest for him, to render the last days of his great career more useful than the first. He hastens over England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland repeatedly, often turning aside with special interest to Cornwall. At Redruth he preaches in the street to "thousands on thousands;" two or three thousands more than were ever seen there before. At his next visit the crowd was still greater; they not only filled the street and all the windows, but sat upon the house-tops. Gwennap, and all the regions round about, poured into its amphitheatre "more than ever were there before;" "but it was all one," he says: "my voice was strengthened accordingly, so that every one could hear distinctly." At Falmouth he writes: "The last time I was here, above forty years ago, I was taken prisoner by an immense mob, gaping and roaring like lions: but how is the tide turned! High and low now lined the street from one end of the town to the other, out of stark love and kindness, gaping and staring as if the king were going by. In the evening I preached on the smooth top of the hill, at a small distance from the sea, to the largest congregation I have ever seen in Cornwall, except in or near Redruth. And such a time I have not known before since I returned from Ireland. God moved wonderfully on the hearts of the people, who all seemed to know the day of their visitation."

At Helstone he preached a midday sermon, in the High-street, to the largest and most serious congregation which he had ever seen there. At Newlyn and Penzance it was impossible to occupy the chapels. He had to go out to the vast crowds. "I know not that I ever spent," he says, "such a week in Cornwall;" "the word of God seemed to sink into every heart." At St. Ives he could say: "Nearly forty years' labour has not been in vain here. Well nigh all the town attended, and with all possible seriousness." At Port Isaac he preached to almost all the inhabitants; "how changed," he writes, "since the time when he that invited me durst not take me in, for fear his house would be pulled down!"

Similar scenes occurred almost every where on his long routes. In Ireland he was followed with enthusiasm, and "the work was increasing in every part of the kingdom more than it had done for many years." The Dublin Society had "outrun" (in 1787) "all in England but that of London." He subsequently finds that the communicants at St. Patrick's are more numerous, at one time, than they used to be through the whole year before Methodism reached the city; and, still later, he went to its altar with such a company as he supposes "had not been seen there for above a hundred years." At the Cathedral in Limerick he was even invited to assist in the administration of the Eucharist; a fact which he considered a condescension on the part of its clergy, but which history will record as an honourable reminiscence of the old edifice. On approaching Cork he was met by a cortége of thirty men on horseback, who conducted him into the city, once the scene of his fiercest persecutions in Ireland. There were now four hundred Methodists in it. "In the afternoon," he writes, "I stood in the vacant space near the preaching-house, capable of containing many thousands. An immense number assembled. There was no disturbance; the days of tumult here are over, and God has now for a long season made our enemies to be at peace with us."

At his next visit he dines with a Roman priest, Father O'Leary, his "old antagonist" in a newspaper dispute on Popery, and both were good enough scholars and gentlemen to make themselves mutually agreeable.* He was received at the Mansion House, and conducted by the mayor through the charitable institutions of the city. Cork had now become "the Capua of his preachers," and he almost feared the hospitality which had taken the place of the old trials under which they had grown brave and strong. At Aughalan he

* See "Letters to the Freeman's Journal, Works, vol. x.

found such a congregation as he had never seen in the kingdom. The tent, or canvass-covered pulpit, was placed at the foot of a green sloping mountain, on the side of which the huge multitude sat, row above row. While he was explaining, "God has given unto us his Holy Spirit," a divine influence seemed to descend upon the assembly. Tears of joy were shed, and cries were heard on every side, only so far suppressed as not to drown his voice. "I cannot but hope," he says, "that many will have cause to bless God for that hour to all eternity." He preached in the market-house at Enniskillen, "formerly a den of lions," he writes: "but the lions are become lambs. They flocked together from every part, and were all attention. Before I had half done, God made bare his arm, and the mountains flowed down at his presence. Many were cut to the heart, and many rejoiced with joy unspeakable; surely the last shall be first, and poor Enniskillen shall lift up its head above many of the places where the Gospel has been long preached." In the evening he addressed another numerous congregation at Sidare, at the foot of the mountains. "One would wonder," he says, "whence all the people came. They seemed to spring out of the earth. Here, also, there were once many bitter persecutors; but they are vanished away like smoke. Several of them, indeed, came to a fearful end, and their neighbours took warning by them."

At Nenagh he addressed a large congregation, and writes that "for many years we seemed to be beating the air here; but a few months since God so blessed the preaching of poor John Bredin, just tottering over the grave, that we have now a lively society, swiftly increasing in both grace and numbers." At Athlone he found "the work of God much increased," and the three ministers of the town had become favourable to the Methodist evangelists. He was admitted to the church at Aughrim, and it was "filled as it scarce ever had been;" and "God enabled me," he adds, "to find the way to the hearts of both Protestants and Roman Catholics. I never saw so general an impression made upon the hearts of this people before." He still found that the army afforded good auxiliaries to Methodism. At Kilkenny, he says, "Religion was here at a low ebb, and scarce any society left, when God sent three troops of horse, several of whom are full of faith and love. Since they came the work of God has revived. I never saw the house so filled since it was built, and the power of God seemed to rest upon the congregation as if he would still have a people in this place." At Carlow he preached to the most affected congregation he had seen there; and he writes: "Here is a plentiful harvest;

the rather because several of the troopers quartered here are much alive to God, and 'adorn in all things the doctrine of God our Saviour.'" At Pallas, twelve miles from Limerick, "all the remains" of his old friends, the Palatine German Irish, whose emigrant brethren had founded Methodism in America, came to salute him from Balligarane, Court Mattress, and Ratheal; "in all which places an uncommon flame had lately broken out, such as was never seen before. Many in every place had been deeply convinced, many converted to God, and some perfected in love." Some of their societies had doubled in number, some had increased six or even ten fold. All the neighbouring gentry were likewise gathered at Pallas, so that no house could contain them, and he was obliged to stand abroad. "The people," he writes, "swallowed every word, and great was our rejoicing in the Lord."

Decaying then, as he is in body, his soul is still on fire, and he is yet the flaming evangelist he had been for half a century.

Among his older societies in England, his visits are attended with unprecedented success and affecting interest. The age of the venerable man saddens the people more than himself. Toward the close of this decade there are solemn leave-takings as he passes along his routes. At each visit they expect to see his face no more, and at every place, after giving to his societies what he wished them to receive as his last advice—*to love as brethren, to fear God, and honour the king*—he uniformly gives out and sings with them a hymn, invoking a peaceful cessation of life on the day that there must be a cessation of his labours.*

His passages over the country are a sort of religious ovation. At Burslem he was to preach at five o'clock in the morning, but the eager people anticipated him, and, soon after four, he was saluted by a concert of music, both vocal and instrumental, at his gate, making the air ring with a hymn to the tune of Judas Maccabeus. It was a good prelude, he writes; "so I began almost half an hour before five; yet the house was crowded both above and below." The Methodists flock from place to place to hear him, for they know the privilege must soon cease. Companies go out to meet him, and conduct him into the towns. His preachers, who are now numerous in most parts of the land, gather in his assemblies, refreshing themselves by his ministrations and by their mutual greetings; he is to them as Elijah to the "sons of the prophets"—a man who had

* Crowther's Portraiture of Methodism. The words were:

"O that without a lingering groan,
I may the welcome word receive;
My body with my charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live."

uttered wondrous words and wrought miracles in Israel, and the day of whose ascension, in the chariot of fire, is at hand.

Fortunate would the artist have been who could have followed him, and preserved for his numerous people representations of the touching or grand scenes of these his last years—his preaching in the Gwennap amphitheatre, to audiences such as Whitefield probably never saw; in Redruth street, with the wondering hosts hanging on the windows and roofs, as well as crowding the neighbouring streets; his address in Newgate to forty-seven men who were under sentence of death, "the clink of whose chains was very awful," but most of whom sobbed with broken hearts while he proclaimed that "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth;" or the night scene, near Newcastle-under-Lyne, where the silvered locks of the tireless apostle gleamed in the clear moonlight as he stood, "in the piercing cold," preaching, under the village trees, to a multitude four times as large as could have got into the chapel.

His congregations were so much augmented that he was compelled to make unusual exertion in order to be heard by them. At Shaftesbury he preached to such an assembly as he had never seen there before, and among them stood respectfully the "gentleman" who, thirty years before, had sent his officer to order him out of the borough. At Blackburn no house could contain the people; he addressed them in the open air; the vast mass were "still as night" while he expounded "that awful Scripture, 'I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God,'" and when they sung "their voices were as the sound of many waters." At Bingley, Atmore, one of his itinerants, had to preach at the same time with him, so immense was the host. At Todmorden he writes, after his discourse, "How changed are both the place and the people since I saw them first! 'So the smiling fields are glad, and the human savages are tame!'" At Ballast Hills he addressed "an amazing congregation;" it "was doubled" by that at Fell in the afternoon, and the latter still doubled at Garth Heads at night. Three sermons a-day were not unusual to him; they still number sometimes four a-day. At Hull, where we have seen him mobbed at his first visit, stoned in his carriage as he rode through the streets, and the windows of his host's house all broken to the third story, he now preached to an immense assembly in the principal church. "Who," he writes, "would have expected, a few years since, to see me preaching in the High church at Hull!" At Barnsley he addressed, near the market-place, a great congregation, and "the word of God sank into many hearts; formerly," he says, "it was

famous for all manner of wickedness, they were then ready to tear any Methodist preacher to pieces; now not a dog wagged his tongue." At Newark the town authorities, mayor and aldermen, requested him to preach at a convenient hour for them to hear him, and all came; a striking enough contrast with what used to be his reception from the magistrates of most towns. At Plymouth he had to be lifted over the seats to the pulpit; the crowd was impenetrable, and such a number of communicants he supposes was never seen before at Plymouth Dock. After "a solemn parting," he writes, "we took coach, leaving such a flame behind as was never kindled here before. God grant it may never be put out." At Exeter "God uttered his voice, and that a mighty one;" he knew not that he had ever seen such an impression on the people of that town. At Chester he addressed a congregation larger, he estimates, than he had ever had any where. At Bolton five regular clergymen were with him, and aided him to administer the Eucharist to twelve or thirteen hundred communicants. "I took a solemn leave," he adds, as usual now; "here, at least, it undeniably appears that we have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." At Castle Carey he writes: "How are the times changed! The first of our preachers that came hither the zealous mob threw into the horse-pond; now high and low earnestly listen to the word that is able to save their souls." At Gloucester, also, the "scandal of the cross had ceased; high and low, rich and poor, flocked together, and seemed to devour the word. Many were cut to the heart, for it was a day of the Lord's power."

It would seem indeed that never had his preaching been attended with more vivid effect than now (in his eighty-fifth year); continually we read of the "power of the word," of the weeping, and sometimes of the outcries and prostration of his hearers. Under his prayer, in the society at Coleford, "the flame broke out; many cried, many sank to the ground, and many were troubled exceedingly." Such noises, and the confusion produced by the eagerness of the people to hear him, were now the only disturbances he met; he had outlived all others, though some of his preachers had yet to encounter them. Even at Oxford, memorable place to him, the pressing crowd, "by their eagerness to hear, defeated their own purpose."

In the beginning of 1790 a printed circular was issued containing the list of his northward appointments, beginning with Stroud and ending with Aberdeen.* His London brethren appended a

* Rev. John S. Stamp, in Wesleyan Magazine, 1845, p. 119.

postscript saying: "Our friends here earnestly desire that Mr. Wesley may be remembered in prayer, especially at the next Quarterly Fast, that his strength may be continued, and, if it please God, increased also." On this route he preached his last sermon at Newcastle. One of his preachers there has recorded, but too briefly, some particulars of the visit: "He appears very feeble; and no wonder, he being nearly eighty-eight years of age. His sight has failed so much that he cannot see to give out the hymn; yet his voice is strong, and his spirits remarkably lively. Surely this great and good man is the prodigy of the present age!" "He preached in the evening to the children of the Sunday school, from Psalm xxxiv. 11. It was calculated to profit both them and persons of riper years. This sermon was literally composed and delivered in words of not more than two syllables. A small party of us accompanied him to North Shields, where he preached an excellent sermon from Phil. iii. 7. It was indeed a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." "On the Lord's day, at two P.M., he went to Byker, and addressed several thousands of people in the open air, from Matt. vii. 24; and at five P.M., at the Orphan House, from Eph. ii. 8. The house was much crowded; many hundreds returned, not being able to obtain an entrance. On Monday he proceeded on his journey. He was highly honoured in his ministry here, particularly to one who had been in a state of great despair for many years. As soon as he arrived at the Orphan House he inquired after this individual, and I accompanied him in visiting him. As he entered the room where the poor man was he went up to him, and, as a messenger from God, said, 'Brother, I have a word from God unto thee: Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.' He then knelt down to pray, and such a season I have seldom experienced. Hope instantly sprang up, and despair gave place; and although he had not been out of his habitation, nor even from his wretched bed, for several years, he went that evening to hear Mr. Wesley preach, while God graciously confirmed the testimony of his servant in restoring him to 'the light of his countenance.'"*

On the 28th of June, 1790, he enters into his eighty-eighth year. For above eighty-six years he had found, he says, none of the infirmities of old age; his eyes did not wax dim, neither was his natural strength abated; but in the last August he experienced a sudden change. His eyes became so dim that no glasses would help them, and his strength likewise now quite forsook him. But he feels no pain from head to foot; "only it seems nature is exhausted, and,

* Rev. Charles Atmore, Wesleyan Magazine, 1845, p. 120.

humanly speaking, will sink more and more, till the weary springs of life stand still at last."

Bending now with years, he had to be sustained by the arms of his friends along the streets, and helped into the pulpit; but he moves on in his career, quoting cheerfully the classic poet, "'Tis time to live if I grow old."*

He had been compelled to give up his morning five o'clock sermon during several weeks, for his mouth was feverish and dry at that early hour, but he attempts to resume it, as if unwilling to yield a tittle to any thing short of the invincible power of death itself.

But it was befitting he should depart to his rest; his work was done, sublimely done, and apparently secure for ever. Most of his early fellow-labourers and fellow-sufferers for the faith had gone; some of the most eminent, as well as some of the humblest, had died during this decade. Before we take our leave of him at the grave, let us turn a glance back upon some of the important transactions of this period, and upon a few of those heroes who lie fallen on the field upon which the veteran leader still moves and conquers.

* The son of Crabbe gives, in his biography of the poet, a brief scene in the last days of Wesley. "At Lowestoft, one evening, all adjourned to a Dissenting chapel, to hear the venerable John Wesley on one of the last of his peregrinations. He was exceedingly old and infirm, and was attended, almost supported, in the pulpit, by a young minister on each side. The chapel was crowded to suffocation. In the course of the sermon he repeated, though with an application of his own, the lines from Anacreon:

'Oft am I by women told,
Poor Anacreon! thou grow'st old;
See! thine hairs are falling all;
Poor Anacreon! how they fall!
Whether I grow old or no,
By these signs I do not know;
By this I need not to be told,
'Tis time TO LIVE, if I grow old.'

"My father was much struck by his reverend appearance, and his cheerful air, and the beautiful cadence he gave to these lines; and after the service he was introduced to the patriarch, who received him with benevolent politeness."

CHAPTER IX.

SKETCHES OF SOME OF WESLEY'S FELLOW-LABOURERS WHO DIED IN THE PERIOD FROM 1780 TO 1790.

Robert Wilkinson—His Self-conflicts—His sublime Death—Thomas Payne—His early Adventures—He begins to Preach in the Army—His Death—Jacob Rowell—His singular Conversion—He becomes a Preacher—The Dales—First Methodist Society of Wensdale—Rowell's Travels and Trials—His powerful Preaching—Vincent Perronet—His Connection with Wesley—His Afflictions—Anecdote of Fletcher—Perronet's happy Death—He predicts the Permanent Success of Methodism—Fletcher—He marries Mary Bosanquet—Her early Life—Her Charities—Her Schools at Leytonstone and Cross Hall—Sarah Ryan—Margaret Lewen—Mrs. Crosby—Wesley's Views of Female Preaching—Fletcher's Piety—His Catholicity—His Charities—His remarkable Death—His Posthumous Influence in Madeley—Death of Charles Wesley—His Last Poetical Composition—His Habits and Character—Happy Deaths of Methodists—Remarkable Examples.

Robert Wilkinson died at the beginning of this period. He was a humble labourer, but a genuine hero in both life and death: "an Israelite indeed," says Wesley; "a man of faith and prayer, who, having been a pattern of all good works, died in the triumph of faith." A sore struggle had this good man to get into the way to heaven, for his conscience was naturally sensitive, and the ignorance of all about him, respecting evangelical piety, was incredible. "The people saw my distress," he writes, "but, not knowing God, could not point out a cure." He gave up card playing and "vain songs," and even abandoned his favourite violin, but found no rest to his soul. The Methodist itinerants penetrated to his village: after hearing one of them, he says, that at night on his bed "the Lord cut him to the heart," and he could not help "roaring" for the disquietude of his soul. "I felt," he adds, "that I must perish unless some way to escape were found which I knew not of." Immediately he wished the Methodists to pray with him, particularly a young man whose earnest life had deeply impressed him, and was afterward a model for his own; a youth who, from the day of his conversion, was a pattern to all the society; and who, after having walked four years in the light of God's countenance, died in the full assurance of faith, testifying for many months before his death that the blood of Christ had cleansed him from all sin, and uttering, as

his last words, "Glory be to God for ever and ever! Amen, and Amen!"*

Wilkinson, whose mind was evidently morbid, sank deeper and deeper in despondency. He goes to a Methodist class. "What is the state of your soul?" asks the leader. "I am left without one spark of hope that God will ever have mercy upon me," cries out the heart-broken man; "for," he writes, "the enemy had suggested that I was guilty of a sin which God never would pardon." "No," replied the leader, "you are not, for if you were you would not now be using the means of grace!" The Methodist leaders knew how to meet the Adversary in such cases, for they had to encounter him often on that ground; they believed that no soul was hopeless, however guilty, in which the Divine Spirit could still inspire a good purpose. Deliverance came at last; the awakened man was enabled to believe that God for Christ's sake had forgiven all his sins, and found peace in thus believing. Spectators who knew his distress perceived by his countenance that "the Lord was gracious to him, before he had the opportunity to tell them. He then went rejoicing home, and could not help telling what God had done for his soul." He had subsequently some hard conflicts, but became an exemplary witness for even the "perfect love" that casts out fear.

He began to preach in 1768. He entered the itinerant ranks in 1769, and, after about twelve years of heroic labours and trials, died joyfully. He was mighty in prayer. One of his fellow-evangelists says, that "he loved the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength," and adds: "He was truly meek and lowly in heart, and little, and mean, and vile in his own eyes. I found my mind amazingly united to him for the time we were together, like the soul of David to his beloved Jonathan. I loved him much for the mind of Christ I saw in him, and for his zeal for the Lord of Hosts." His death was a sublime scene. He bore his afflictions with great patience, frequently adoring God, and repeating the words, "He knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." When he perceived that he must die, he exhorted his wife to cast all her care upon the Lord, and encouraged her to believe that his grace was sufficient for her. He then prayed for her and his two children, earnestly entreating God to protect them in "this troublesome world, and to

* Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, vol. iii. p. 398.

supply all their wants. He next prayed fervently for Wesley, "that the presence of the Lord might continue with him all his days, and crown him at last with eternal glory." He then remembered his three fellow-labourers on the circuit, "praying that the Redeemer would assist them in their great work; that he would forthwith bless the labours of all the preachers, and preserve them until they should join the Church triumphant; and that his kingdom might spread unto the ends of the earth."

During the night he passed through one of those trials of mental agony which good men often experience under the depression of disease; but, praying fervently, he was delivered, and "seemed as if he were admitted into heaven, to converse with God and angels and saints." He suddenly awaked his wife, and said, "Thou hast been sleeping, but I have been in heaven. O what has the Lord discovered to me this night! O the glory of God! the glory of God and heaven! The celestial city! the New Jerusalem! O the lovely beauty! the happiness of paradise! God is all love; he is nothing but love. O help me to praise him! O help me to praise him! I shall praise him for ever! I shall praise him for ever!" "And so," says his brother labourer, "Robert Wilkinson departed this life in peace, December 8, 1780."

He died on the market-day of the town, and the news spread rapidly among the multitude, who were assembled from all the regions round about; "the people of God were remarkably blessed in hearing of his dying testimony; the worldly people and backsliders were cut to the heart." When the itinerant preached over his corpse, one hearer was converted, and "went from the solemn place as the shepherds from the heavenly vision, blessing and glorifying God." The Methodists bore him from the preacher's house to the grave, singing a hymn, as was their custom; "they sang," says the pious chronicler, "lustily and with a solemn spirit, for the Divine presence was with us all the way through, and in such a manner as I never knew before at any funeral." As the words of the burial service, "Not to be sorry as men without hope," were read, his devoted wife, who had faithfully shared his ministerial trials, and was leaning on the arm of a friend at the grave, with her two young children by her side, bursting into tears of joy, spontaneously repeated the words; and as she exclaimed, "Sorry! No, no! Glory, and praise, and blessing be ascribed unto God for ever and ever!" A "remarkable power," says the record, "fell upon all who could hear her;" they were melted into tears, some of grief, others of joy, and from that time "the work of God began to revive in Grimsby;

the country people caught the fire, and carried it along into their little societies;" and so good Robert Wilkinson triumphed in his grave as in his life.

Thomas Payne was another humble but successful labourer during these times. He died in the early part of 1783. A simple but very curious narrative is his autobiography, written at Wesley's request, and inserted in the old Arminian Magazine,* presenting many strange adventures and striking illustrations of the power of early religious impressions, inextinguishable through all the waywardness of subsequent life. He was the child of Baptist parents, who trained him devoutly, and he heartily thanked God through his life for a pious education, which laid the foundation for his final reformation. From his earliest recollection he had "felt the strivings of God's Spirit," and he "prayed much and desired to be truly religious when but ten years old." But in youth evil company led him astray; he deserted his employer, a leather-dresser; was sent by his friends to London; enlisted in Burgoyne's dragoons, but was rejected as not being tall enough; entered the East India service, and was despatched to Saint Helena. Those were bad times (1759) for England in all departments of life, but especially on shipboard, and young Payne was thrown into the very vortex of immorality. Drunkenness, profanity, and licentiousness prevailed all around him; but his conscience survived. When about to be attacked, in the Bay of Biscay, by a French frigate, he was troubled with the conviction that he was not fit to die. During a perilous storm he was alarmed by the same thought, and by the fearful fate of some of his drunken associates: one of them fell overboard and sank; a second fell from the mast to the deck, and his brains were dashed out; a third would have shared the same fate had he not caught to the clue-garling of the sail; the same man afterward fell into the sea while uttering blasphemous language, and was lost. Terribly did Payne's conscience smite him at these times; but he says, "I thought it was decreed, and was easy again." On the island appalling results of vice stared him in the face. "Indeed," he writes, "we had men killed continually. Some, getting drunk, rolled down precipices; others fell into the sea. And I verily think half of the army, and half of the other inhabitants of the island, did not live out half their days, which often gave me very serious thoughts of the uncertainty of human life."

These scenes, with some others which, as he describes them, were evidently natural accidents, distorted by his simple credulity and

* Arminian Magazine, 1781, p. 580.

alarmed conscience, led him earnestly to desire religious guidance, but for a long time he could find none on the island. Year after year, when the storeship arrived from England, he inquired if any praying men were on board. At length one arrived who fortunately had been educated at Wesley's Foundry, probably by honest Silas Told; he found later another, and they three "resolved to serve God together." They met at night on a mountain-side to pray. Once, while on his knees with his companions at this place, Payne cried out, "with an uncommon ecstasy of joy and astonishment, 'O God, my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed! I will sing and give praise!' Being divinely assisted, I believed," he continues, "with my heart unto righteousness; on which God shed abroad his love therein, and gave me the Spirit of adoption, crying, 'Abba, Father,' which Spirit witnessed with my spirit that I was a child of God. I then could not refrain from declaring what God had done for my soul. I cried out to those about me, 'Why cannot you praise God with me and for me? I am so filled with the love of God, methinks I am just ready to fly up to heaven with my very body.'"

Many now were his conflicts without and within; the latter for want of experienced religious counsellors, for all he had, besides his two young companions, was a pious German book. His fellow-soldiers persecuted him, but stood in awe of his devout life. Some of them were strangely reclaimed by him. One on parade uttered terrible imprecations to provoke him. Immediately a horror fell upon the depraved man, and from that hour he had no rest, day or night, till he made an open confession to a magistrate that, seven years before, he had murdered a soldier, whose image followed him wherever he went. Upon this confession, judicially repeated, he was condemned to die. When under sentence he sent for Payne, and begged him to converse and pray with him, which, with the permission of the authorities, he did till the day of the execution. The smitten soldier died with Christian hope, declaring, "This is the best day I ever saw. I am going to heaven to praise Christ to all eternity!"

Payne's good conduct secured him promotion and abundant income; he married, and in his prosperity began to slacken his religious strictness; but he found a copy of Wesley's Sermons, and some of his extracts from William Law, which re-awakened his conscience. He had terrible struggles and fearful dreams, and resolved to go to England to hear sound preaching and get among living Christians. After spending some time there, his funds being exhausted, and failing of other employment, he again enlisted in a regiment of foot. He could not find three religious men among all his

comrades, and forthwith began in good earnest to preach to them. Receiving a furlough, he went to his old home at Nailsworth, and "exhorted the people to turn to God!" He made similar visits to Cirencester and Stroud. When his regiment moved to Leeds the zealous Methodists of that town soon had him hard at work; he preached many times in the streets, and not a few people, who probably would not have been otherwise reached by the truth, were reclaimed from their sins. The preachers occasionally sent him out upon their circuits, and he had now become an itinerant in regimentals. He purchased his discharge from the army, sent to St. Helena for his family, and thenceforward warred a good warfare for Christ till he died. Wesley directed him first to London, that the experienced Methodists there might train him well; thence he was sent to Ireland, "to take off," he says, "my rough military edge, and to break me thoroughly to the work on the rough mountains of the North." He speaks of the damp, dirty, smoky cabins of Ulster as a good trial for him. "More and more sinners were converted to God" every time he went round his circuit. "I lie before God," he wrote to Wesley, "to be as clay in the hands of the potter; to be just what he would have me to be; as holy and as happy as my nature and state can bear. . . . I believe it is my privilege to be all holy, in the very complexion of my soul, in all my tempers, thoughts, words, and actions."

Through about eleven years did this zealous man pursue his itinerant labours in various parts of the country. Prostrated at last by sickness, he felt that his work was done, and believed his death to be at hand. "His conversation was truly in heaven," says one of his fellow-labourers; "his exhortations and persuasions to all that came near him, to devote themselves entirely to God, were delivered in such a powerful manner as made deep impressions on every heart."

The day before his death Rankin called to see him. After some conversation concerning the goodness of God to him, the dying itinerant said: "You are going to preach. Tell the people, tell the societies, I die a witness of the truth I have preached to others. And I now solemnly declare I believe the doctrine taught by the Methodists; and that the discipline they enforce is, above all others, the best calculated to bring sinners to God, and to keep them close to him." About an hour before he departed, his wife, seeing him in agony, said: "My dear, you appear as if your heart were breaking." He replied: "Let it break! let it break! But it is hard work to die!" While a group of his brethren were on their knees commending his soul to God, he fell asleep in Jesus. "Thus," says one of his companions, "departed this Christian hero,

this valiant soldier of Christ, who counted not his life dear to him so he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry he had received from the Lord." Such is a brief sketch of the singular history of Thomas Payne, one among many of the striking examples which early Methodism afforded of the power of religion over the hearts and lives of men in the most unfavourable circumstances. Wesley, referring to his death, says with his usual brevity, but more than usual emphasis: "Mr. Payne, who had been in the army for many years, was a plain, honest, zealous man, fearing neither men nor devils. And, as he bore down all opposers while he lived, so in death he triumphed over his last enemy, being more than conqueror through Him who had loved him."

Jacob Rowell died in 1783, worn out by ministerial labours. In the year 1747 Christopher Hopper, a mighty man of those days, went into the Dales in the North of England, preaching in the market-places and on the highways. Allendale, the native place of Rowell, was noted for its ignorance and depravity,* and Hopper's appearance there provoked much opposition and general excitement. Rowell, going to or returning from a cock-fight, saw the crowd flocking around the preacher in the open air, and stopped, with his bag on his shoulder, to listen, when an arrow of truth pierced his heart. He became a praying man, and in 1748 began to exhort his neighbours in Allendale and Cornwood to "flee from the wrath to come." The moral state of the people of the beautiful district of Weardale attracted his sympathies, and, accompanied by a zealous friend, he went thither to preach to them. Before arriving they knelt down on the snow, and prayed that God would incline some one to receive them, and open the way for their mission. At the first door that they approached they were welcomed; they were entertained several days, praying and preaching; they saw many of their hearers awakened; they repeated their visits, and soon formed the first Methodist society of the place, with about twenty members.

And now Rowell was instant in season and out of season, travelling the long chain of mountains which extends through Allendale, Weardale, and Teesdale, and sounding the alarm among their villages, until Wesley sent him to Ireland in 1751. Having thus entered the "regular itinerancy," he continued to labour with his might for thirty-four years. He was greatly useful on the Newcastle, Cornwall, Leeds, and Dales circuits. The latter, so noted in the early records of Methodism, he formed h... lf, in 1757. There probably had not been, down to that date, any regular circuit be-

* "Methodism in Former Days," by Anthony Steele. Wesleyan Magazine, 1843.

tween Leeds and Newcastle. Rowell was familiar with the ground, as it was the scene of his first labours; and he soon comprised, in his long "round," Teesdale, Weardale, Allendale, Lunidale, Arkindale, and Swaledale, and extended his travels to Hexham, North Tyne, and Alston. His modern successors in the North can estimate from the list of names what were the labours of their ministerial fathers. With his long travels and continual preaching he had also to endure frequent persecutions from "the illiterate, rude, and even brutal inhabitants of those parts," and was sometimes exposed to personal danger. On one occasion when he was expected at Middleton, in Teesdale, a mob was raised and headed by some of the most influential persons in the place. He was escorted through the town by two of his brethren, who walked arm-in-arm with him. A rustic, who had peculiar qualifications for such an undertaking, had been appointed by the rioters to begin the attack: watching his opportunity, as the preacher was crossing a small brook, he ran, and struck with all his force at Rowell's heels, intending to trip him up and prostrate him in the stream; but, missing his aim, the mob beheld their champion sprawling on his back in the water. This was enough, says the narrator; he received such a ducking as damped his courage and confounded his associates, who left Rowell to pursue his way uninjured.

He was a man of extraordinary natural eloquence, and so pathetic that he was long known among the Methodists as "the weeping prophet." Remarkable effects attended his sermons, and, in the dialect of the Dales, he bore the singular cognomen of *Fell 'em in th' heck*, in allusion to the fact that his powerful word often struck down listeners at the *heck* or door-porch of the chapels. When he left the circuit he had gathered into its societies more than four hundred persons. Like his patriarchal namesake, he is said to have been mighty in prayer, "wrestling" with God. He was unusually effective in awakening rude and hardened men. Wesley appointed him to preach at a Conference; his natural diffidence shrunk from the task, but no itinerant could disobey such an order without recreance to his office. Such was the power of his discourse that Wesley afterward exclaimed, "What have I been doing? What has my brother Charles been doing? This man will save more souls than both of us!" He travelled till he could no longer mount his horse, and then pursued his work in a small carriage given to him by his friends, until his infirmities compelled him to cease. "Jacob Rowell, a faithful old soldier, fairly worn out in his Master's service," wrote Wesley when he recorded his death.*

* Wesleyan Conferences, &c., vol. i. p. 166.

The year 1785 was rendered memorable in the annals of Methodism by the decease of two of its best and greatest men.

On the 9th of May the venerable Vincent Perronet, vicar of Shoreham, departed to his eternal rest by a death which all good men might envy. He was "entitled, on various accounts," says a Calvinistic Methodist authority, "to a conspicuous place among the brightest ornaments of the Christian Church in the last century."* Like his friend Fletcher, who was to meet him in heaven a few weeks later, he was of Swiss-French descent. Having graduated at Oxford, he served the parish of Sandwich, Kent, about nine years, and was then presented to the vicarage of Shoreham, where he continued "a bright and shining light" more than half a century.

In 1746 he became acquainted with Wesley, and ever afterward maintained the most intimate friendship and co-operation with him. He was Wesley's most confidential counsellor. Charles Wesley called him the "Archbishop of Methodism." He welcomed the travelling evangelists into his own church, though his parishioners mobbed them. When Charles Wesley first appeared in his pulpit, they "roared, stamped, blasphemed, rang the bells, and turned the church into a bear garden." Their hostility was subdued, however, and when John Wesley arrived, soon after, he preached without interruption, and for nearly forty years the vicarage was a frequent and endeared refuge to both the great leaders, and the Shoreham church virtually a Methodist chapel. Perronet published several works in defence of Methodism.† He gave two sons to Wesley's Conference, one of whom, Charles Perronet, died in the itinerant ministry in 1776, after more than twenty years' faithful service.‡ The other, Edward Perronet, retired on account of his health, and his dissatisfaction with the adherence of the Conference to the

* Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon, vol. i. p. 387.

† [Perronet's writings are now very rarely met with, and a list of them is not without interest: 1. A Vindication of Locke, 1736. 2. A Second Vindication of Locke, 1738. 3. Enquiries chiefly relating to Spiritual Beings, in reply to Hobbes, 1740. 4. An Essay on Recreations, 1745. 5. Some Thoughts on the Divine Hospitality of the Gospel, 1745. 6. An Earnest Exhortation to the strict Practice of Christianity, 1745. 7. An Affectionate Address to the Quakers, 1747. 8. Dialogues on Original Sin, &c., 1747. 9. Defence of Infant Baptism, in reply to Gale, 1749. 10, 11, and 12. Three Letters to Bishop Lavington, all published separately, 1749, 1751, and 1752. 13. Short Instructions and Prayers, 1751. 14. Answer to a Treatise entitled "Heaven Open to all Men, 1753. 15. A Dialogue between the Pulpit and the Reading-desk, 1767.—E.E.]

‡ See an account of his death in the Arminian Magazine for 1781, p. 529: "He was a living and a dying witness of the blessed doctrine he always defended—entire sanctification. God," he said, shortly before his death, "has purged me from all my dross; all is done away. I am all love!"

national Church. He lived many years at Canterbury, where he always co-operated with the Methodists, receiving Wesley to his home, and aiding him and his preachers in their religious labours. He rented a large house in the ancient palace of the archbishop, near the cathedral, and opened its spacious hall for the ministrations of his Methodist friends.* The clergy of Canterbury, who were hostile alike to Perronet and Methodism, resented this bold invasion of their precincts, and "employed a mob of the baser sort," secretly engaging also forty soldiers from the barracks, to enter the house and break up the worship. The attack was successful. The pulpit was brought out and burned in the Butter-market, where Wesley had first preached in the town. Perronet afterward purchased and fitted up for the Methodists an old French church. He died in 1791, exclaiming, "Glory to God in the height of His Divinity! Glory to God in the depth of His humanity! Glory to God in His all-sufficiency; into His hands I commend my spirit!" He is known throughout the English world by his grand hymn: "All hail the power of Jesus' name!"† (First published in the Gospel Magazine of 1780, without his name, but printed in 1785 in his "Occasional Verses, Moral and Sacred.")

England in those days presented no household more consecrated than that of the Shoreham vicarage. It was sanctified by many and heart-touching sorrows. The wife of the vicar, and one after another of his numerous children, fell around him into the grave; but at each afflictive blow a new grace, and majesty even, seemed to settle on the religious character of the venerable man. All his family were members of the Methodist class at Shoreham, and all "died in the Lord." One of his sons, as has been related, received such an impression from the mere sight of Fletcher as led to his conversion.‡ Another died on the Continent while struggling to

* "Methodism in Canterbury." Wesleyan Magazine, 1837, p. 420.

† Evangelical Magazine, 1859.

‡ Contemporary books often speak of the peculiar impression produced by the appearance of this holy man. An example is recorded by a living Methodist preacher as occurring in his early travels in the remote wilds of Louisiana. On his circuit he found a settler who had been reproved by Fletcher at Madeley for profanity; he was "struck dumb" by the look of the vicar, and though he afterward went to sea, forgot the words of the rebuke, and was recklessly wicked, that look never escaped his mind. "It followed him every where, into whatever part of the world he went, and annoyed him in all his sins." On penetrating Louisiana, and hearing the Methodist itinerant fifty years later, the remembered "look" overpowered him. "No longer resisting the impression which had followed him the world over, he yielded, obtained pardon, lived holily, and soon after died in great peace."—Letter of Rev. D. Devinne to the Author.

rescue the wrecks of the property of his ancestors; but he had been with Fletcher at his retreat for health in Switzerland, and was led by him to the saving knowledge of God before his homeward and fatal passage. Another was converted through the instrumentality of his brother Charles, and died in such triumph as filled the house with holy joy. The daughters were especially beloved and devoted. Wesley records, as we have seen, a remarkable revival of religion in Shoreham, produced by the labours of one of them. She had the charge of his family for some years, and was the companion and solace of his old age, but was snatched suddenly from him by death. The venerable man, when he saw she had expired, stood up and worshipped God, exclaiming, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints! Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" "This," says the narrator, "was a scene never to be forgotten by those who were present."* The good vicar was left at last, with the snows of many winters upon his head, to be comforted by the care of two grand-daughters; but one was crushed at his side by an affecting sorrow. We find in Wesley's journal the only extant allusion to the sad scene.† A gentleman, so called, had, by the utmost assiduity, and innumerable professions of the tenderest affection, gained her love by slow degrees. The time of the marriage was fixed, the ring was bought, and the wedding clothes were sent to her. He came a week before the day, and continued to avow the most ardent regard, but, at a later visit, sitting down very carelessly on a chair, he declared in the coolest manner that he had changed his purpose; that he had been mistaken, did not love her, and could not marry her. He walked away, leaving her dumb with grief. The sorrow which she endeavoured to conceal preyed upon her spirits till, three or four days after, she suddenly laid down, and in four minutes died. "One of the ventricles of her heart burst, so she literally died of a broken heart." "When," adds Wesley, "old Mr. Perronet heard that his favourite child, the stay of his old age, was dead, he broke into praise and thanksgiving to God, who had 'taken another of his children out of this evil world.'" Frequent are Wesley's allusions to the afflictions of the consecrated parsonage, for he was incessantly turning aside to it, but not so much to give as to receive religious consolation.

A laborious itinerant of that day‡ records thankfully the comfort he received there from the patriarch, ninety years of age: "He has

* Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 26. † Journal, Oct. 23, 1782.
‡ Memoir of Rev. Thomas Cooper, Wesleyan Magazine, 1835, p. 12.

often expressed to me his thankfulness to the Almighty for safely landing his children in eternal glory, 'where,' he said, 'I shall shortly meet them to part no more!'" He cheered the itinerant with prophetic hopes, founded as well upon his views of prophecy as the Methodistic signs of the times, "that the Lord was about to accomplish great changes in the world;" that "the power of antichrist was about to be shaken to its foundation;" that "there would be an overflowing of light, and liberty, and love; and that the dispensation of the glorious Gospel would diffuse its enlivening beams to every part of the world." The prophecy has ever since been fulfilling. "I shall not then be here," he added, "but I shall be above, and from thence look down to see the glory of the Lord among mankind." He was at times so absorbed in God as not to be conscious of the presence of those who were around him, and, with uplifted hands and eyes, would repeat, "Glory, glory, glory be to God for ever and ever! Amen! Amen!"

"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," and many a Christian household has found itself mercifully protected from the corruptions of prosperity, and its dearest ties safely transferred to the final home, by the incessant guardianship of the angel of death. The aged vicar saw most of his family swept away. After continuing his labours till he was eighty-five years old, he waited a few years more in meditation and prayer for his own departure. Wesley writes in his Journal, that on the 7th of May, 1785, "that venerable saint, Mr. Perronet, desired his grand-daughter, Miss Briggs, who attended him day and night, to go out into the garden and take a little air. He was reading, and hearing her read, the last three chapters of Isaiah. When she returned he was in a kind of ecstasy, the tears running down his cheeks, from a deep sense of the glorious things which were shortly to come to pass. He continued unspeakably happy that day, and on Sunday was, if possible, happier still. And indeed heaven seemed to be, as it were, opened to all that were round about him. When he was in bed she went into his room to see if any thing was wanting; and as she stood at the foot of the bed he smiled and broke out, 'God bless thee, my dear child, and all that belong to thee! Yea, he will bless thee!' which he earnestly repeated many times, till she left the room. When she went in the next morning (Monday, 9th) his spirit had returned to God! So ended the holy and happy life of Vincent Perronet, in the ninety-second year of his age. I follow hard after him in years, being now in the eighty-second year of my age. O that I may follow him in holiness, and that my last end may be like his!" Charles Wesley

laid him to rest in the grave, expecting soon to follow him. Perronet's love of Methodism was ardent to the end. He was not deterred by Charles Wesley's High Church prejudices from calling it, in his letters to him, "the Methodist *Church*." "I make no doubt," he wrote to the poet, "that Methodism, notwithstanding all the wiles of Satan, is designed by Divine Providence to introduce the approaching Millennium."*

In a little more than three months (Aug. 14, 1785) his fellow-countryman and old friend, Fletcher of Madeley, joined him in heaven. Down to the year 1781 Fletcher had remained unmarried, his home at the parsonage being superintended by a humble housekeeper on a scale of monastic severity, while his income from Switzerland and his vicarage, above his absolute wants, was given to religion and the poor. He now found a wife who verified the wise man's declaration, that "whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord;" and whose example, beautiful as his own with holiness, has been a blessing to the women of Methodism in all lands whither the English language has extended.

Mary Bosanquet has left us memoirs of herself, written with admirable simplicity and candour, and in a style superior to that of most of the early biographers of Methodism. She was born of wealthy parents in 1739. When between seven and eight years of age she would often "muse on that thought, What can it be to know my sins forgiven, and to have faith in Jesus?" The inquiry perplexed her dawning mind, but she was enabled to cry out with joy, "I do, I do rely on Jesus; yes, I do rely on Jesus, and God counts me righteous for what he hath done and suffered, and hath forgiven all my sins." She was surprised, she adds, that she could not find out this before. She had seized the profoundest and most distinctive idea of Christianity.

Her family moved in the circles of fashionable life, and she was led by them into the gaieties of Bath and London—to the ball-room and the opera; but her devout aspirations could not be quenched. A Methodist servant-maid was employed in the household; her conversations with a sister of Mary, overheard by the latter, confirmed her religious impressions, and were, in fine, instrumental in determining her subsequent life.

Her girlhood had charms, from her affectionate and elevated character, if not from her person,† and she had a suitor who, for

* Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 26.

† Her extant portrait is evidently little better than a caricature, poorly executed, and representing her plethoric and advanced in life.

his wealth and position, was encouraged by her parents, but whose fashionable habits she could not reconcile with her scriptural views of religion. She became acquainted with some intelligent female Methodists of London, and was thenceforward resolute to forsake the follies which beset her condition in life. Walking in the garden of her father's country house at Epping Forest, she recalled their religious conversations. "The prospect of a life wholly devoted to God" now absorbed every other consideration. "Such a sweet sense of God,"* she says, "the greatness of his love, and willingness to save to the uttermost, remained on my mind, that if I but thought on the word holiness, or of the adorable name of Jesus, my heart seemed to take fire in an instant, and my desires were more intensely fixed on God than ever I had found them before."

Her natural temperament, while favourable to piety, was also liable to superstition; an almost clairvoyant nervous power seemed to belong to her constitution, and the early accounts of her relate marvels which still puzzle the reader; but her good sense and Christian modesty preserved her from dangerous delusions even at this early period of her life.

Her parents wished her to accompany them to Scarborough, hoping to dispel her religious disposition by its summer gaieties; but, with filial affectionateness and Christian meekness, she pleaded to be spared what she deemed so great a peril. She was left with her friends in London, where she now became acquainted with Sarah Ryan, a woman of remarkable character, and one of Wesley's most intelligent and interesting correspondents.† At her house Mary Bosanquet found the companionship her devout heart needed. A few of the most devoted members of the London society were frequently gathered there. "The more I saw of that family," says Miss Bosanquet, "the more I was convinced Christ had yet a pure Church below; and often, while in their company, I thought myself with the hundred and twenty that waited to be baptized by the Holy Spirit. Whenever I was from home this was the place of my residence, and truly I found it to be a little Bethel."

One day her father said to her: "There is a particular promise which I require of you; that is, that you will never on any occasion, either now or hereafter, attempt to make your brothers what

* Life of Mary Fletcher, by Henry Moore, part i.

† See his nineteen letters to her (Works, vol. xii.); and also her autobiography in the Arminian Magazine, 1779. She had charge, for some time, of the Kingswood school, as housekeeper. Wesley says, "I know not that any other person was ever so regarded both by my brother and me."

you call a Christian." "I answered," she writes, "looking to the Lord, I think, sir, I dare not consent to that." He replied, "Then you force me to put you out of my house." "Yes, sir," she answered, "according to your views of things I acknowledge it; and, if I may but have your approval, no situation will be disagreeable."

Having attained her majority, and possessing a small fortune in her own right, she removed, with the approval of her parents, to lodgings at some distance from her father's house, and, securing a maid-servant, lived there in religious peace, devoting her time to usefulness, and her income, above her necessities, to a few poor widows whom she had for some time aided.*

"And now that thought, I am brought out of the world, I have nothing to do but to be holy, both in body and spirit, filled me," she says, "with consolation; thankfulness overflowed my heart; and such a spirit of peace and content flowed into my soul, that all about me seemed a little heaven. I had now daily more and more cause for praise. I was acquainted with many of the excellent of the earth, and my delight was in them. Yet I was not without my cross; for every time I went to see my dear parents, what I felt when, toward night, I rose up to go away, cannot well be imagined. Not that I wished to abide there; but there was something in bidding farewell to those under whose roof I had always lived, that used to affect me much, though I saw the wise and gracious hand of God in it all, and that he had by this means set me free for his own service."

Thenceforward her life was one of unostentatious but active devotion and benevolence. She entered fully into the labours of the London Methodist societies, and became a witness, through life and in death, for the doctrine of sanctification, as well as justification by faith, as taught by Wesley. A house of her own at Leytonstone, her native place, becoming vacant, she removed thither with her friend, Sarah Ryan, in 1763, and converted it into a charity-school for destitute orphans. It was also made a Methodist preaching-house, and in a fortnight a society of twenty-five members had been formed. The institution at Leytonstone became not only a refuge for orphan children and the poor, but a sanctuary to the devout, and a home for preachers. Wesley visited it in his journeys with delight. "I rode over to Leytonstone," he writes, December 12, 1765, "and found one truly Christian family." In 1767 he says: "O what a house of God is here! not only for decency and order, but for the life and power of religion. I am afraid there are very

* Methodist Magazine, 1817, p. 527. London.

few such to be found in all the King's dominions." Its unavoidable trials—within, from incompatibilities of temper; and without, from misconstructions of its design and economy—were borne patiently by its benevolent proprietress, and managed skilfully by her able friend, whose experience at Kingswood was now of valuable service. Sarah Ryan, after much affliction, died a blessed death under its roof, 1768; and other similar death scenes were recorded in its interesting history.*

The institution was now removed to Cross Hall, in Yorkshire, where a large farm was secured for it. Here also it became the centre of active religious labours. Worshippers flocked to its meetings from a distance, so numerously that they could not be accommodated; and similar services were established by Miss Bosanquet in various parts of the county. Wesley visited Cross Hall, as he had Leytonstone, and says, (July 7, 1770,) "It is a pattern, and general blessing to the country."

She was now not only a band-leader and class-leader, but a public speaker in her numerous rustic assemblies. Her assistants at Leytonstone, Mrs. Crosby† and Miss Tripp, followed her example in these labours, and with great usefulness. Her characteristic good sense and modesty secured her general respect, notwithstanding her extraordinary course. She and her associates followed strictly the advice of Wesley. He had recorded the example of his own mother, who held similar meetings at the Epworth Rectory, and had

* Wesley says, in his Journal, October 31, 1766, that he was suddenly called to Leytonstone to attend in death Margaret Lewen, "a pattern to all young women of fortune in England, a real Bible Christian. So she 'rested from her labours, and her works do follow her.'" Margaret Lewen was a wealthy young Methodist, who lived and died in the family. She left two thousand pounds to it; but Miss Bosanquet did not claim the legacy, for fear it should be ascribed to her management by the family of Miss Lewen. Her death was remarkable, with some sad but unexplained incidents; yet she departed in great triumph. "When I am dying," she said, "if I cannot speak, ask me any question, and if I mean yes, I will hold up my hand, for I would wish to praise God to the last." In the evening she seemed just departing; her hostess asked, "'Is glory open before you?' She lifted up her hands, pointing with one finger, and strove to speak, but we could only make out the word 'Glory;' the joy of her countenance was beyond all words, and in this posture she in one moment breathed her last."

† This devoted woman lived to an extreme age, an admirable example of "primitive Methodism." When nearly seventy years old she wrote: "My soul in general dwells in peace and love. I live by faith in Jesus, my precious Saviour, and find my last days are my best." "If I had strength, how I would praise the Lord!" she exclaimed as she expired, October 24, 1804, aged about seventy-five years.

thereby filled the parish church. "I think the case rests here," he wrote; "on *your* having an extraordinary call. So I am persuaded has every one of our lay preachers; otherwise I could not countenance his preaching at all. It is plain to me, that the whole work of God termed Methodism is an extraordinary dispensation of His providence; therefore, I do not wonder if several things occur therein which do not fall under ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul's ordinary rule was, 'I permit not a woman to speak in the congregation.' Yet, in extraordinary cases, he made a few exceptions; at Corinth in particular."* The example would seem perilous; but under proper regulations it had assumed, in the "Society of Friends," even a graceful beauty, and was not productive of extravagances. St. Paul had prohibited women from public interference with Church affairs; but was his language to be literally and rigorously applied to cases like these? Do we not read of the prophetesses and deaconnesses of his times? Wesley wrote to these excellent ladies: "The difference between us and the Quakers in this respect is manifest. They flatly deny the rule itself, although it stands clear in the Bible. We allow the rule; only we believe it admits of some exceptions."

They did not intrude into pulpits; their discourses were usually exhortations, sometimes expositions of Holy Scripture. In later years Mary Fletcher had a seat elevated a step or two above the level of the floor, whence she addressed the people in the several chapels which she and her husband erected in the vicinity of Madeley.† Her discourses are described as luminous and truly eloquent, displaying much good sense, and fraught with the riches of the gospel;‡ and years later Wesley says: "Her words are as a fire, conveying both light and heat to the hearts of all that hear her." Her manner of speaking, he writes, is "smooth, easy, and natural, even when the sense is deep and strong."§ She guarded with good sense against extravagance in her meetings. Speaking of one of them she says: "Some little touches of enthusiasm were beginning to creep in among us, which I thought the more dangerous, as the meeting now grows very numerous, members being added from all sides. Yet it was a great trial for me to have to reprove

* See Wesley's Letters, Works, vol. xii.

† Hodson's Funeral Sermon. ‡ Ibid.

§ Journal, March 12, 1787. For a very able review of the whole subject of female preaching, and many interesting examples of it in early Methodism, see the "Promise of the Father," etc., by Mrs. Phœbe Palmer, (Boston: 1859;) also Taft's Biographical Sketches of Holy Women. London: 1825.

them: 1. Because many are much further advanced in grace than I am. 2. I was deeply conscious it is one of the most delicate subjects in the world, and requires both much wisdom and much love to extinguish false fire, and yet to keep up the true. All the day I kept pleading before the Lord, mostly in these words of Solomon: 'Ah! Lord, how shall I, who am but a child, go in and out before this Thy chosen people.'" *

Such was the woman whom Fletcher selected for his wife; "a woman," says Robert Southey, "perfectly suited to him in age, temper, piety, and talents."†

In November, 1781, they were married in Batley Church. Their nuptials presented a scene befitting the Apostolic Christians, or a world of unfallen inhabitants. It was in the truest sense a religious festival. About a year afterward Fletcher wrote to Charles Wesley, who knew the felicity of a happy marriage: "I thank you for your hint about exemplifying the love of Christ and his Church. I hope we do. I was afraid at first to say much of the matter, for new married people do not at first know each other; but having now lived fourteen months in my new state, I can tell you Providence has reserved a prize for me, and that my wife is far better to me than the Church to Christ; so that if the parallel fail, it will be on my side."

Fletcher and his wife were both more active than ever, in Christian usefulness, during the four years of their happy union. They opened new places of religious worship in Madeley, and among its neighbouring hamlets. He erected a chapel and school-house in Madeley Wood, in order to secure Methodist services in the parish, if any changes after his death should exclude them from its church;‡ and immediately subsequent to the origin of Sunday schools, he established them in the town, and quickly had three hundred children under instruction. Accompanied by his wife he preached in many places; and visited Dublin, where their labours left a lasting blessing to the Methodist societies. At Wesley's Conferences, as we shall have occasion to notice, Fletcher's counsels and saintly example harmonized discords, and were received by the assembled evangelists as those of a messenger from the heavenly world. Daily, as he approached the grave, he appeared to be nearer that world, and its serene light seemed to shine perpetually upon him. Few men have defined better the doctrine of Faith; and the remark may be soberly ventured, that

* Moore's Life of Mary Fletcher, part iii.

† Life of Wesley, chap. 30.

‡ See book iv. chap. 5.

perhaps no man has ever better exemplified the "life of faith" in his daily Christian walk. Faith in the atonement as the sole ground of spiritual life, and in the gift and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, as the great result of the atonement, was his habitual theme. The "dispensation of the Holy Ghost," as the prerogative of the Church, he dwelt upon in the pulpit and in conversation continually. He lived and died in the assurance that this prevalence of the Spirit was limited in the world, only because the faith of the Church regarding it was feeble, and that the "glorious wonder of a Pentecostal Church" would yet be seen among men. Thus, full of divine life, he was of course full of charity. He shared Wesley's liberal views. "God forbid," he wrote, "that I should exclude from my brotherly affection, and occasional assistance, any true minister of Christ, because he casts the gospel net among the Presbyterians, the Independents, the Quakers, or the Baptists! If they will not wish me good luck in the name of the Lord, I will do it to them. They may excommunicate me if their prejudices prompt them to it; they may build up a wall of partition between themselves and me; but in the strength of my God, whose love is as boundless as his immensity, I will leap over the wall."

His charities to the poor continued to exhaust his income to the last. His wife, equally liberal, assures us that if he could find a handful of small silver when he was going out to see the sick, he would express as much pleasure over it as a miser would in discovering a bag of hidden treasure. He was hardly able to relish his dinner if some sick neighbours had not a part of it. On Sundays he provided for numbers of people who came from a distance to attend his ministrations; and his house as well as his church was devoted to their convenience. Being called upon by a poor man, who feared God, but who was reduced to great difficulties, he took down all the pewter from the kitchen shelves, saying, "This will help you, and I can do without it; a wooden trencher will serve me just as well." During epidemic and contagious diseases, when others fled from the sick and dying, he flew to them, offering his services to watch them by night as well as by day.

Benson, who knew him many years, says of him what Burnet said of Leighton: "I never saw him in any temper in which I would not have wished to be found at death." Wesley speaks of his perfect *courtesy;* "it directed his words, the tones of his voice, his looks, his whole attitude, his every motion."

This good and great man departed to his eternal rest not with peace merely, but with extraordinary triumph. He returned home

from his parish duties, on a midsummer day, exhausted and feverish with a cold. On the ensuing Sunday, resisting, after two days' confinement, the admonitions of his friends, he went to his church: it was the last day of his ministrations there. Before he had read far in the service his countenance changed, he was seized with faintness, and could scarcely proceed. The congregation was alarmed and in tears; his wife pressed through the crowd, and entreated the dying man to desist; but he seemed to know it "was the last time," and persisted. The windows were opened, and afforded him relief; his sermon surprised his hearers by its more than usual pathos and power, and "an awful concern was awakened through the whole assembly." Descending from the pulpit, he walked up to the communion table, saying as he went, "I am going to throw myself under the wings of the cherubim, before the mercy-seat." Several times did he sink exhausted on the sacramental table, while the congregation wept and sobbed aloud at the sight. Having struggled through a service of four hours' duration, he was supported, while uttering benedictions on the people, to his chamber, where he fell in a swoon, and never again went out but when borne to the grave. For several days he suffered much, but with continual praise upon his lips. "God is love! Shout! shout aloud! I want a gust of praise to go to the ends of the earth!" cried the sinking man. A visitor asked him if he thought God would not raise him up. "Raise me up in the resur—" he gasped. On the next Sunday a supplicatory hymn was sung for him in the church. A brother clergyman, who officiated on the occasion, says that there can be no description of the scene; the burst of sorrow that attended the supplication; the sadness and even the consternation that prevailed through the village which had been consecrated so long by his holy life; the running to and fro of messengers with reports of his condition. "The members of every family sat together in silence that day awaiting with trembling expectation the issue of every hour."*

The poor who came from a distance to attend the service, and who were usually entertained at his house, begged to see him once more. They were allowed to pass along the gallery, and to take, through the opened door of his chamber, their final look at his beloved face. He died that night. "I know thy soul," said his wife, as she bent over him, when he could no longer speak; "I know thy soul; but, for the sake of others, if Jesus be very present with thee, lift up thy right hand." Immediately it was raised.

* Gilpin's Biographical Notes, in Fletcher's Portrait of St. Paul.

"If the prospect of glory sweetly opens before thee, repeat the sign." He instantly raised it again, and in half a minute a second time. He then threw it up, as if he would reach the top of the bed. After this his hands moved no more. Breathing like a person in common sleep, he died August 14, 1785, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. "Many excellent men," said Wesley, "have I known, holy in heart and life, within fourscore years; but one equal to him I have not known: one so uniformly and deeply devoted to God, so unblameable a man in every respect, I have not found either in Europe or America, nor do I expect to find another such on this side of eternity." *

Weeping and lamenting "thousands" bore the remains of Fletcher to the grave, singing on the way:

> "With heavenly weapons he has fought
> The battles of his Lord;
> Finish'd his course, and kept the faith,
> And gain'd the great reward."

Nearly twenty years after his death, a Wesleyan itinerant, whose circuit included Madeley, wrote of Fletcher and his posthumous influence: "He, being dead, yet speaketh. He lives in the memory of hundreds, and his spirit and temper live in the people's hearts. Such a spirit of piety as prevailed for several miles in and about Madeley, I had never before witnessed." †

On the 29th of March, 1788, another great light of Methodism went out, or rather sunk below the horizon, still throwing its rays high upon the sky, and brightening the prospect of even our times.

Charles Wesley had not his brother's legislative talent. His poetic nature suffered the melancholy, the morbid discontent usual to such genius. Had the leadership of Methodism early devolved upon him by the death of his brother, as was at one time likely, it would probably have been either extinct to-day, or hardly distinguishable as a special religious agency in the world. He opposed nearly every great measure of his brother which has contributed to its organic power and permanence. His character as a poet has already been repeatedly alluded to, and will hereafter be more fully considered. As a preacher he was more eloquent than his brother. He continued to labour till the last in Wesley's London and Bristol chapels, and when the infirmities of age rendered him unable to proceed through an entire sermon, he still clung to the pulpit,

* Wesley's Life of Fletcher, Works, vol. xi.

† Rev. Robert Crowther, 1803, in Wesleyan Mag., 1834, p.p. 885, 886.

calling upon his congregations to sing while he rested through brief intermissions. To the last year of his life he maintained the Methodistic habit of ministering to the condemned of the prisons, as he had done at first in Oxford, visiting them in their cells, and presenting their cases to his congregations for public prayers.* The last of his poetical publications, issued but three years before his death, was entitled, "Prayers for Condemned Malefactors." In a manuscript note to this pamphlet he wrote: "These prayers were answered Thursday, April 28, 1785, on nineteen malefactors, who all died penitent. Not unto me, O Lord! not unto me!"

The Castalian fount seemed to be opened in his very heart, and welled forth undiminished by age. Clothed in the midst of summer with his winter dress, says one of his London associates, he rode daily a small horse, gray with age, but which was often a Pegasus to him. If a subject for verse struck him when he mounted, he would expand it as he rode, and pencil it in short-hand, on a card which was always carried for the purpose. Often, when he returned to the City Road parsonage, did he leave his pony in the garden, and enter crying out: "Pen and ink! pen and ink!" Supplied with these he would finish the composition before recognizing or saluting any one who might be present. But when the inspired task was done, no man could be more courteous. After the kindest salutations and inquiries, he usually "gave out a short hymn, and thus put all in mind of eternity."†

His last sickness was long, but was borne with "unshaken confidence in Christ, which kept his mind in perfect peace." He called his wife to his bedside, and requesting her to take a pen, dictated his last but sublime poetical utterance:

> "In age and feebleness extreme,
> Who shall a sinful worm redeem?
> Jesus, my only hope thou art,
> Strength of my failing flesh and heart;
> O could I catch a smile from thee,
> And drop into eternity!"

"For fifty years," says his biographer, "Christ, as the Redeemer of men, had been the subject of his effective ministry and of his loftiest songs, and he may be said to have died with a hymn to Christ upon his lips." He was in the eightieth year of his age; his heart retained the warmth of youth, and his ecclesiastical prejudices were unchanged. He refused to be buried in his brother's

* Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 26.
† Moore's Life of Wesley, book viii. chap. 3.

tomb, among the now illustrious dead of City Road Chapel, because it was not "consecrated ground." Methodism owes so much to him, that it can well excuse the honest eccentricities of his genius. He was the first member of the "Holy Club" at Oxford; the first to receive the name of Methodist; the first of the two brothers who experienced regeneration; and the first to administer the sacraments in Methodist societies apart from the church.* Like his brother, he was short in stature; and when they both, assisted by Dr. Coke, administered the Eucharist at City Road Chapel, it was matter of remark that the three men who were exerting the largest religious influence of their day, were each so small in person, while so great in spirit. Charles Wesley was desultory in his habits, being exact only in the neatness of his handwriting and in keeping his accounts. He was abrupt in his manners, but without affectation; he was self-contradictory, but tenacious in his opinions; a staunch Churchman, but the first, and for many years the chief man to conduct Methodist worship in Church hours, which he did to the last in the London chapels. He detested democracy, and satirized Fox and Burke alike with Wilkes and the lowest of liberal demagogues. He was a thorough scholar in classical and Biblical literature. Horace and Virgil were his most familiar classics; the Æneid he had largely in his memory, and would quote it volubly, as a check to his resentment, when under provocation. The termagant wife of John Wesley once shut him and his brother in a room beyond escape, and poured forth her complaints against them in a strain which could not be interrupted; the poet invoked the help of his Mantuan brother, and repeated the classic Latin so vehemently as to subdue the shrew and obtain his liberation. His friendships were ardent and inviolable. An air of sadness, deepening often into despondency, hung about him. He was the best hymnologist, one of the best preachers, and, with a few pardonable weaknesses, one of the best men of his age. Hundreds of thousands of dying Methodists have blessed his memory, as they have sung or gasped the lyrics in which he has taught them to exult over death.†

Such are some of the names which appear in the obituary of Methodism for this decade. The examples here given are historical, not only in their lives and characters, but in their deaths, for

* At the time that he and the Kingswood colliers were repulsed from the sacrament at the Bristol churches, he conducted his poor converts to their new school-house at Kingswood, and there consecrated the Eucharist for them, thus introducing, on his own responsibility, the practice of separate communion.—Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 27.

† See note at the end of this chapter.

triumphant death-scenes had become a characteristic feature of Methodism. It taught its people that it was not only their privilege to live joyful lives in the Lord, maintaining daily the conscious forgiveness of sins, and even "entire sanctification"—the "victory which overcometh the world, even their faith;" but, as "the sting of death is sin," they were taught also that it was their Christian right, as saved from sin, to challenge death itself with the apostolic exultation, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" Records of happy deaths had become a staple of the Methodist literature of the times, and have continued to be such to our day. The annual Minutes for more than a hundred years have recorded them as they have occurred in the ministry; thousands of instances are thus preserved, and it may literally be said of most of the preachers of Methodism, that more is known of their triumphant deaths than of their laborious lives. The journals and magazines of the denomination have no "department" more regularly filled, or more attractive to devout minds, than that of "Obituaries." The Arminian Magazine had been published for ten years; it became a repertory of such narratives, and it now recorded from month to month the deaths of the comparatively few of Wesley's earliest members, who were fast dropping around him; for two-score years later its most numerous and most interesting obituaries were of those who had been gathered into the societies in his last years, and by the veteran lay preachers of his day. The old historic names of the ministry continually occur in them. While these memoirs give many important glimpses of early Methodist history, they show, above all, how well the Methodists of those times of struggle were taught to die. They are usually brief, and always simple and candid, recording dying trials like those of Thomas Walsh, as well as dying triumphs.* They speak of many a hard final combat, attributed always to the great adversary rather than to disease; but the dying saint becomes almost invariably the victor. John Henry, says one of them, tried to say, "Thy will be done," but could not. His despondency deepened into despair, and he cried out in agony that he was lost, lost at last. But the enemy recoiled before the precious promises: "The Lord shall give thee the desire of thine heart upon thine enemy;" "The Lord will never leave thee nor forsake thee;" and he now joyfully proclaimed his deliverance from "the hellish oppressor," crying out: "Jesus! my God and my all! O how far

* See book iv. chap. 1.

did the enemy exact upon me, and the son of wickedness afflict me! O thou cruel enemy, Jesus will give me the desire of my heart upon thee! Now I know that my Redeemer liveth. Jesus, thou art my God! my life! my light! my joy!" "Thus," says one of his brethren, "he went on without bounds or measure, glorifying God for his deliverance, and expressing his astonishment at the delusions the devil had led him into; and at God's great goodness in saving him from the hand of the destroyer."

Some of these last scenes are surpassingly sublime. The severest agonies are borne with exultation; the lowliest hovels are made bright with the glory of heaven; the rupture of the tenderest ties is accepted with hymns of thanksgiving, by the dying and the living, as the brief though painful means of reunion in the abode of angels. The reader of the old Methodist publications is surprised at the frequency of accounts of deaths in the coal-mines; for Methodism had penetrated and sanctified many of these subterranean regions of England, as primitive Christianity had the catacombs of Rome. Davy, next to Wesley among the benefactors of the wretched colliers, did not give them the safety-lamp till long after the Methodist evangelists had borne into their dark caverns the lamp of Divine truth. Explosions were of frightful frequency, and Methodist workmen were often reported among the victims. Parting from their brethren with hymns at the five o'clock morning sermon, they descended to their daily toils, and were sometimes borne home before night blasted by the fire-damp, but praising God, and rejoicing as fallen heroes borne off the field in the hour of victory. "If there be a good man among the Methodists it is John Patrick," said the people of Yorkshire, for he walked among his fellow-colliers not only in "the regeneration" but in "sanctification." An explosion in a mine "wrapped him in a sheet of flame." He was dreadfully burned from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, and was a shocking spectacle when taken out of the pit. Notwithstanding the flesh was dropping from him in pieces, yet, to the astonishment of the beholders, his first act was to fall upon his burned knees and adore God. Being brought home, as soon as he entered the house, and before he had spoken to either his wife or child, he again dropped upon his knees, and with eyes and heart uplifted, cried out, "Glory be to thy name! Thy will be done! thy will be done!" No martyr ever suffered at the stake such agonies as this humble Methodist endured; none ever suffered with greater triumph. We cannot be surprised when, after such a scene, the old record tells us, that from the night of his funeral sermon a

revival began in Mosbro', which resulted in the conversion of more than half a hundred of his neighbours. Pages of scarcely less sublime examples could be compiled from the early annals of Methodism. It was its mission to bless the poor; to remedy their physical wretchedness as much as possible; but, above all, to purify their inward life, and to secure to them in death the "life eternal." It did both, to an extent which commanded the acknowledgment of candid observers. "It has been amazingly beneficial," wrote a clergyman of the Establishment, who had seen its effects upon the miners of Cornwall; "it has turned the wretched heathens in the Forest of Dean, and thousands of heathens as wretched in the collieries all over the kingdom, into sober, professed, and practical Christians; and I should be happy to see my own parishioners all Methodists at this moment."* Such proofs of its beneficial power were visible enough, to unprejudiced observers, in the lives of its reclaimed people; but Methodists themselves could say, over their suffering and dying brethren, "Precious in the sight of the Lord" are their deaths also.

* Polwhele's Memoirs of Rev. John Whitaker, Rector of Ruan, Langhorne, p. 141.

Note.—Charles Wesley's excellent wife survived him thirty-four years, and died at the extreme age of ninety-four, in 1822. Among the many indiscretions of the biographers of Wilberforce is a misrepresentation, from a private letter of that good man, to the purport that the Methodists neglected the widow and children of Charles Wesley, and that they were dependent on an annuity which Wilberforce and two of his friends provided for her. Wesley secured to his brother, at his marriage, one hundred pounds per annum, and it was guaranteed to his widow. This was in addition to his salary in the London societies. After John Wesley's death the family, doubting, perhaps, the permanence of the Methodist Connexion, proposed to take the principal of the annuity instead of the annual payment. "A request," says Jackson (Life of Wesley, chap. 26), "coming from such a quarter, could not be denied." But instead of investing the money, the family spent it. Mrs. Wesley meanwhile lived with her children, who were above want. The fact that the principal had been spent may have kept her, through delicacy, from consulting with her Methodist friends respecting her financial affairs; but when they ascertained that she had not retained the property, they immediately provided her another annuity, larger, it is supposed, than that procured by Wilberforce; they also secured annuities to her daughter, and her sons Charles and Samuel. Jackson estimates that the family received at least ten thousand pounds from the Methodists "in consideration of his incomparable hymns." The charge of Wilberforce's sons "is as unjust," he adds, "as it is unseemly." Once for all I must admonish the reader, that it would be an endless task to correct the misrepresentations of Wesley and Methodism made by "Church" writers. If any apology may be desirable for the insertion of the above private

and mistaken allusion of Wilberforce by his sons, it may perhaps be found in the fact that they were young men with fervent expectations from the Church; if an apology should be demanded for the continuance of the misrepresentation, after its correction by the best Methodist authority, it may be found in the facts, that one of these young authors has died a Papist, near Rome, and the other has become—the Bishop of Oxford.

CHAPTER X.

CONFERENCES FROM 1780 TO 1790.

The Conference of 1781—First Conference "Cabinet"—Wesley and Fletcher—Session of 1782—Birstal Chapel Case—First regular Irish Conference—Session of 1783—Adam Clarke appears—His early Life—His Religious Experience—He goes to Kingswood School—Begins to Itinerate—Samuel Drew, the Metaphysical Shoemaker—Clarke's Learning and Character—Conference of 1784—Deed of Declaration—Fletcher—Pilmoor and the elder and younger Hampson retire—Fletcher's Farewell—Melville Horne—Formation of the London Missionary Society—James Creighton—He Itinerates—Becomes a Methodist—Matthias Joyce, a converted Papist—His early Adventures—He hears Wesley—Becomes a Methodist—Enters the Ministry—Conference of 1785—Of 1786—Relation of Methodism to the Church—William Bramwell—His Life and Character—Conference of 1787—Ordinations for England—License of Methodist Chapels and Preachers—Richard Reece—Joseph Entwisle—Peard Dickinson—Conference of 1788—Relation of Methodism to the Church—Session of 1789—Dewsbury Chapel—The Session of 1790—Condition of Methodism at the Time of Wesley's last Conference.

The thirty-eighth regular Conference began at Leeds, August 7, 1781. About seventy preachers were present, all expressly invited by Wesley;* 9 candidates were received on trial; 14 probationers were admitted to membership; 2 desisted from travelling; 2 had died since the preceding session; 178 received appointments, including the Wesleys and Fletcher,† the name of the latter appearing for the first time on the roll, probably for the reason that Wesley was now hoping to secure the Madeley vicar as his successor in the event of his own death.

Inverness ceased to be reported among the circuits, reducing their number to 63. The aggregate membership was 44,461; the increase 631, exclusive of America, which now reported 10,539 members, with an increase of 2,035, and 54 preachers, with an increase of 12.

* Wesley's Journal, Aug., 1781. † Minutes of Wesl. Conf. vol. i. p. 147.

The contributions to the Preachers' Fund and Kingswood School amounted to nearly £648; no collections for "Yearly Expenses" were reported.

At this session we have the first intimation of the Conference "cabinet," which has since become an essential fact in American Methodism. Wesley says: "I desired Mr. Fletcher, Dr. Coke, and four more of our brethren, to meet every evening, that we might consult together on any difficulty that occurred."

No theological question seems to have come before the Conference. A few disciplinary resolutions were adopted; bankrupt members of the societies were required to pay "their whole debt," if ever able, and were to be expelled if they would not do so. No more married preachers were to be admitted as members of the Conference, except when there might be a deficiency of single candidates, as the expense of families could not readily be met. Preachers were to publish nothing without the corrections of Wesley, as doggerel hymns and other publications had brought "a great reproach" upon them. The profits of all publications were "to go into the common stock."

This session, and especially the preaching of Wesley and Fletcher, excited great interest among the people of Leeds. Wesley was admitted to the Church pulpit; and allowed, with Fletcher, aided by other regular clergymen, to administer the Lord's Supper at its altar to many hundreds. Fletcher preached to two thousand people at five o'clock in the morning. "Never did I see a man," says one of the itinerants, "who looked more like what I suppose the ancient apostles to have been. I think I never heard a sermon to be compared to it."* Methodist Conferences had already become those great religious jubilees which they have ever since been in both England and America.

The session of 1782, began in London on the 6th of August; 15 candidates were received on trial; 13 probationers were admitted to membership; 6 ceased to travel; 2 had died; 183 received appointments. The circuits amounted to 66; the membership to 45,723; the increase to 1262. The contributions to Kingswood School, the Preachers' Fund, and the "Yearly Expenses," amounted to £1371.

The case of the trustees of the Birstal Chapel, already alluded to, was examined. As the trustees insisted on the choice of their own preachers, and as this course, if generally adopted, would be fatal to the "itinerancy," to which so much of the energy and success of Methodism was attributed, Wesley firmly resisted it, and the Con-

* Rev. Joseph Pescod, in Wesleyan Magazine, 1829, p. 528.

ference resolved to take up collections in all parts of the country for the erection of a new chapel in the town, rather than tolerate so perilous an example; a lesson worthy of historical commemoration. The trustees, convinced of their error, subsequently yielded, and the difficulty was loyally settled.

As most of the preachers who "desisted from travelling" did so from want of sufficient support for their growing families, the Conference enjoined the strictest attention to the financial regulations of the Connexion. "One penny weekly, one shilling quarterly, is our original rule," they said. This simple rule has been the source of all the subsequent and unrivalled financial energy of Wesleyan Methodism.

The old custom of men and women sitting apart in the congregations was ordered to be strictly maintained. All unnecessary conversation in the chapels, before or after public service, was forbidden. To preach both morning and evening was made obligatory upon the members of the Conference.*

Wesley had occasionally held informal Conferences in Ireland; the present year he despatched thither Dr. Coke, and the first regular Irish session was held under his presidency, as the representative of Wesley. There were now in Ireland 15 circuits, 34 preachers, and 6512 members. Down to 1813, when he sailed for India, Coke continued to visit the island, and to be the favourite president of its Conferences. The Minutes of the early sessions were not published separately from those of the English body.

On the 29th of July, 1783, the fortieth Conference began at Bristol; 11 candidates were received; 9 were admitted to membership; 3 ceased to travel; 6 had died; 191 received appointments. The circuits amounted to 69; the membership to 45,995; the increase was but 272. The contributions to the three funds amounted to more than £1425.

It was ordered that no preaching-houses should be built during the year, except such as were already begun; and no collection should be made for any chapel except in the circuit wherein it stands; for the zeal of the people had outstripped their discretion and means, and chapels were multiplying too fast. Coke was commissioned to travel through the Connexion, and see that the chapel

* [This seems to have been the first Conference at which special attention was directed to the more strict observance of the *Sabbath*. Members are advised not to have their hair dressed by barbers on the Sabbath. Members who are volunteers are prohibited from learning or performing the military exercise on that day, and even from being spectators of the exercise of volunteers.—E. E.]

deeds were rectified wherever defective, in order to secure the itinerancy before the decease of Wesley. The preachers suffered more than the people from the itinerancy, but they valued it too highly to have it risked.*

A distinguished name appears for the first time in the Minutes of this session. About the year 1777, John Brettell, a noted Methodist itinerant of that day, "tall, thin, of long sleek hair and a very serious countenance," penetrated to the parish of Agherton, in Coleraine, Ireland. A well-educated but poor schoolmaster resided there, training his family to hard work, hard study, and poor fare, but to good morals. One of his sons, about seventeen years old, was remarkable for his happy temperament, and for his industry, never having lived, he said later in life, a day from his eighth year without doing something to earn his livelihood. He loved books to excess, but had been an unsuccessful student, being unable to master arithmetic, and having abandoned his Latin grammar in despair, till one day, under the rebuke of his teacher and the jests of his fellow-students, his brain experienced a sudden shock, a reaction of his mortified feelings, and his memory was awakened, and "his long sorrow turned into instant joy." Thenceforward he rapidly advanced in almost every branch of learning, until he became one of the few "encyclopedic scholars" of his age, and his reputation spread wherever the English language was known.

When John Brettell preached in a barn at Burnside, in the parish of Agherton, this young man, Adam Clarke by name, went with other youths to hear him, and was deeply impressed by the discourse. The Methodist itinerants now frequented that region, preaching "first in one house and then in another, and spreading themselves over the country," as usual with them. Thomas Barber, an eminent evangelist, came into Coleraine, and the young man's parents went to hear him. "This is the doctrine of the Reformers; this is the true, unadulterated Christianity," exclaimed his mother;

* [The management of Kingswood School was made a subject of consideration. "My design," said Wesley, "in building the house at Kingswood, was to have therein a Christian family, every member whereof (children excepted) should be alive to God, and a pattern of holiness. Here it was that I proposed to educate a few children according to the accuracy of the Christian model." After remarking upon the success that had at first attended the school, he dwells upon its present state, and the want of success attending it, and recommends greater regularity, better discipline, and a stricter attention to the children, who are never to be out of sight of the master, and *never to play*, (as a recreation he wished them to learn husbandry or some mechanic art.) It was found necessary to change the master.—E.E.]

and the Methodist preachers ever afterward found a home in the humble cottage of the family. Thomas Barber led Adam Clarke to the saving knowledge of the truth. "Adam, do you think that God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven your sins?" asked the faithful man. "No, sir; I have no evidence of this," the youth replied. He was directed to pray for it, and the passing word was "like a nail in a sure place." He accompanied his mother to a class-meeting, and soon was fervently seeking the spiritual life of which he heard its simple-minded members speak. He sought it through much mental anguish, but remarked, in advanced life, that the experience he then gained by his long tribulation, was none of the least of his qualifications as a minister of the Gospel.

He has recorded this struggle himself.* One morning, in deep distress of mind, he went out to his work in the fields; he began, but could not proceed. He fell on his knees on the earth and prayed, but seemed to be without ability to utter even a broken supplication. He arose, endeavoured to work, but could not; even his physical strength appeared to have departed from him. He again endeavoured to pray, but the gate of heaven appeared barred against him; the thickest darkness settled on his soul. He fell flat on his face, and again attempted to pray, but still there was no answer; he arose, but was so weak that he could scarcely stand. His agonies were indescribable; he seemed to be for ever separated from God. Death in any form, he assures us, he could have preferred to his present feelings, if that death could have put an end to them. No fear of hell, he says, produced these terrible conflicts. He had not God's approbation, and he felt that without a sense of his favour he could not live. Where to go, what to do, and what to say, he knew not; even the words of prayer at last failed. "O, reader, lay these things to heart," adds the learned man in the maturity of his life. "Here was a lad that had never been profligate, had been brought up in the fear of God, and who, for a considerable time, had been earnestly seeking His peace, apparently cut off from life and hope! This did not arise from any natural infirmity of his mind; none who knew him, in any period of his life, could suspect this; it was a sense of the displeasure of a holy God, for having sinned against Him. He was then being prepared for that work to which he was afterward to be called; the struggle was great, that

* Account of the Religious and Literary Life of Adam Clarke, LL.D., F.A.S., &c., by Rev. J. B. B. Clarke, A.M., vol. i. book ii. See also Everett's Adam Clarke, vol. i. (London, 1843); Wesleyan Centenary Takings (London, 1840); and Etheridge's Life of Adam Clarke (London, 1858).

he himself might not easily turn again to folly, and thus bring condemnation on himself, and a reproach upon God's cause; and it was in all probability necessary that he should experience this deep anguish, that, feeling the bitterness of sin, he might warn others more earnestly, and might speak assuredly to the most despairing of the power of Christ's sacrifice, and of the indwelling consolations of the Spirit of God. God appeared to have 'turned aside his ways, and pulled him to pieces; he had bent his bow, and made him a mark for his arrows; he was filled with bitterness, and made drunken as with wormwood; his soul was removed far off from peace, and he forgat prosperity.' Yet even here, though his stroke was heavier than his groaning, he could say, 'It is of the Lord's mercies that I am not consumed.' Passing through this agony he felt strongly in his soul, 'Pray to Christ;' another word for 'Come to the Holiest through the blood of Jesus.' He looked up confidently to the Saviour of sinners, his agony subsided, his soul became calm; all guilt and condemnation were gone. He examined his conscience, and found it no longer a register of sins against God. He looked to heaven, and all was sunshine; he searched for his distress, but could not find it. He felt indescribably happy, but could not tell the cause; a change had taken place within him, of a nature wholly unknown before, and for which he had no name. He sat down upon the ridge where he had been working, full of ineffable delight. He felt a sudden transition from darkness to light, from guilt and oppressive fear to confidence and peace. He could now draw nigh to God with more confidence than he ever could to his earthly father; he had freedom of access, and he had freedom of speech. He was like a person who had got into a new world, where, although every object was strange, yet each was pleasing; and now he could magnify God for his creation, a thing he never could do before." Shortly afterward his friend Barber came to his father's house. When he departed, the young man accompanied him a little on his way. When they came in sight of the field that had witnessed the agonies of his heart, and the breaking of his chains, he told the preacher what had taken place. The man of God took off his hat, and, with tears flowing down his cheeks, gave thanks. "O Adam," he exclaimed, "I rejoice in this; I have been daily in expectation that God would shine upon your soul, and bless you with the adoption of his children." The youth stared at him, and said within himself, "He thinks surely that I am justified, that God has forgiven me my sins, that I am now His child. O, blessed be God, I believe, I feel I am justified, through the redemption that is in Jesus!" Now

he clearly saw the character of the change he had experienced, and it was only now that he could call it by its name. He felt that, "being justified by faith, he had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom he had received the atonement."

This change in his moral character stimulated his intellect; he applied with new diligence to study, especially to Biblical literature, natural philosophy, mathematics, and languages. He soon began to "exhort," and addressed his rustic neighbours sometimes in nine or ten villages a day. John Bredin, a preacher on the Londonderry circuit, perceiving the promise of the young Methodist, writes to Wesley respecting him. Wesley invites him over to Kingswood School. He arrives at Bristol, and departs to Kingswood with three-halfpence in his pocket. While digging in the garden he finds a half-guinea, and with it purchases a Hebrew grammar, by which, he says, he "laid the foundation of all his knowledge of the sacred writings in the Old Testament." Wesley meets him at Kingswood. "Do you wish," asks the patriarch, "to devote yourself entirely to the work of God?" "Sir, I wish to do and be whatever God pleases," he replies. Wesley lays his hands on the young man's head, prays a few minutes over him, and sends him to Bradford circuit. Clarke calls this his "ordination;"* he never wished any other.

He was now but twenty-two years old.† His work was hard, his circuit long, including thirty-three towns and villages, more than one for every day in the month; and the preachers were almost constantly on horseback, for Wesley trained his men as a wise captain would cavalry. Their rapid movements Clarke considered very advantageous for a young man who had not "much variety of texts or matter." He preached with zeal and success, and was eminently "popular," as much for his talents as his youth. At the present Conference he was admitted to membership without the customary probation, for Wesley discerned what manner of man he was. His second field of labour was the Norwich circuit, on which he preached, in about eleven months, four hundred and fifty sermons, besides exhortations innumerable; beginning every day at five o'clock in the morning, and regularly visiting twenty-two towns and villages, through a route of two hundred and sixty miles, much of which had to be travelled on foot, with his saddle-bags on his back, as there was but one horse on the circuit for four preachers.

* So he names it in the Contents to his Autobiography, book iii.

† The date of his birth is uncertain.

His next circuit was that of St. Austell in Cornwall, where Methodism now had general sway, and where his talents found a befitting field. His popularity at once became universal; his congregations were continually crowded; he sometimes had to climb into the chapel by its windows, passing over the seats to the pulpit; and almost every week in the year he was compelled to preach in the open air to crowds which no chapel could accommodate. He held them spellbound by his word under pelting rains and on deep snow. A general revival prevailed on his circuit, and among the many additions which he made to the Methodist societies was that of Samuel Drew, the noted metaphysical author, who was then an apprentice on the shoemaker's bench, but who rose by his own exertions and his genius to a literary eminence which commanded for him an offer of a professorship in the London University. Drew's works on the "Immateriality and Immortality of the Soul," the "Identity and Resurrection of the Human Body," and the "Being and Attributes of God," though presenting more of ingenious subtlety than of logic, are surprising examples of intellectual power in a special direction, and have given him a wide-spread if not a permanent fame. He became a Methodist local preacher, a defender of Methodism in frequent publications; and Clarke, who was his steadfast friend and patron to the last, pronounced him "one of those prodigies of nature and grace which God rarely exhibits," as the links between mortal men and the inhabitants of higher worlds.

Clarke's great success on the St. Austell circuit rendered the year of his appointment there "an era in its history,"* and also in his own, for henceforward he was one of the most commanding preachers of the Wesleyan pulpit—a pulpit which now presented more popular and effective talent than any other in the kingdom. He maintained his laborious studies, and continued for about half a century to be the most eminent scholar, and one of the most effective labourers, of Methodism. As, in almost every condition of life, sufficient time can be commanded for as much study as the intellect can healthfully endure, the labours of the itinerant ministry were not found by him an insurmountable obstacle to his literary culture. His daily travels gave him daily solitude for his books, and his daily preaching was an invigorating exercise to his mind and body. Wesley himself studied more than most students, and did it on horseback: he says that by his rides he was "as much retired ten hours a day as if he were in a wilderness," and that few persons spent so many hours as he secluded from all company.

* Life of Samuel Drew, by his Eldest Son, sect. 7.

Clarke admired and imitated him, and became skilful in the use of the Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Samaritan, Chaldee, and Syriac versions of the Scriptures, and in most of the modern languages of Western Europe. He studied nearly every branch of literature and of physical science. He was honoured with membership in the London Asiatic, Geological, and other learned societies. His knowledge was not only multifarious but accurate, though not profound; for his intelligence was more extensive than his intellect was powerful. He was a philosopher in the etymological sense of the word, but not in its received sense; for, though vast in his acquirements, he was deficient in the faculty which classifies knowledge, and assimilates it into intellectual power. His Biblical Commentaries, an immense but diffuse mass of erudition, have been used throughout the Methodist world. They betray some eccentricities of opinion. His bibliographical works have become obsolete. His Memoirs of the Wesley Family, and other biographical productions, are mostly valuable for their abundant facts, almost invariably accurate, though marked by his characteristic defects. His sermons are good without being great. As a preacher he was pre-eminent for his simplicity and unction, and the expository instruction which his great learning enabled him to bring to the illustration of the sacred text. Though he studied his discourses thoroughly, he always preached extempore; and, after delivering five thousand sermons, he could not recall an instance in which he knew beforehand a single sentence that he should utter, for his memory could not retain words. He had a cordial heart, the courtesy of a perfect Christian gentleman, and was unwavering in his friendships. Characterized by frankness, piety, and generous aspirations in his youth, by every noble trait of character in his manhood, and by a genial, hopeful, and sanctified old age, he was even more interesting as a man than as a scholar. He early became a leader among his brethren, and none of them exceeded him in zeal for Methodism, or in catholic labours in the Christian philanthropies of his age. No one during his life commanded larger congregations, or secured larger collections for public charities, or was elevated an equal number of times to the presidency of the Connexion.

Such is probably about the estimate which impartial history will hereafter give of this great and good man.

The forty-first Conference began in Leeds, on the 27th of July, 1784: 8 candidates were admitted on trial; 25 were received into membership; 5 retired; 2 had died since the last session; 197 received appointments. The circuits amounted to 72, exclusive of

the Isle of Jersey, which appeared on the Minutes for the first time, and America, which are named in the appointments but not numbered with the circuits. The membership is reported at 64,157; but this estimate includes 14,988 in America; the increase, exclusive of America, was 3174. The increase in America was 1248. The three Conference contributions amounted to nearly £1681.

The probation of candidates was prolonged to four years at this session; but its most important proceeding was its confirmation of Wesley's "Deed of Declaration." John Hampson, Sen., and his son John Hampson, Jun., with William Eels and Joseph Pilmoor, endeavoured to form a party among the preachers against it; the apparent reason of their opposition being the fact, that their names had not been inserted among the one hundred appointed by the Deed to be the legal Conference after Wesley's death. The debate in the session became violent and personal. Fletcher was present, and by his pious influence produced a temporary reconciliation. In the height of the dispute, his words were as oil poured on the troubled waters. "Never," says a young itinerant who was present, "never, while memory holds her seat, shall I forget with what ardour and earnestness Mr. Fletcher expostulated, even on his knees, both with Wesley and the preachers. To the former he said, 'My father! my father! they have offended, but they are your children.' To the latter he exclaimed: 'My brethren! my brethren! he is your father!' and then, portraying the work in which they were unitedly engaged, fell again on his knees, and with much fervour and devotion engaged in prayer. The Conference was bathed in tears; many sobbed aloud." *

It was hoped that the strife was thus finally ended, and Wesley recorded that "four of our brethren, after long debate, acknowledged their fault, and all that was past was forgotten." † But he was disappointed. The elder Hampson seceded soon after the session, and became a pastor among the Independents; but as he was aged and feeble, and his Church poor, the Conference generously allowed him a small annuity [of £12] during the eleven remaining years of his life; for Methodism, though always poor, has always been financially generous. His son also deserted the Conference, and obtained ordination and a curacy in the Establishment; he wrote a life of

* Biography of Rev. Charles Atmore, by Rev. J. S. Stamp, in Wesleyan Magazine, 1845, p. 14.

† Journal, July 27, 1784, Works, vol. iv.

Wesley, which was full of misrepresentations; but, though written to please Churchmen, it could not obtain credit enough to enable it to survive its author. William Eels continued in the Conference three years longer, but never pardoned the omission of his name from the Deed of Declaration, and seized the opportunity of some new provocation to desert his brethren, and join the secession of John Atlay at Dewsbury. Joseph Pilmoor had laboured successfully in America; he now returned, entered the Protestant Episcopal Church, and lived many years an estimable and venerated man. To the last he entertained a strong sympathy with English if not American Methodism; and his correspondence with his old fellow-labourers in England shows that he was of too generous a temper to retain long his resentment against Wesley.

Fletcher, whose devout spirit had converted the disputes of the session into a scene of prayer and tears, parted from them with an address which left them weeping and sobbing at his adieus. Appealing to Wesley, he said: "I fear my successors will not be interested in the work of God, and my flock may suffer. I have done what I could. I have built a chapel in Madeley Wood; and I hope, sir, you will continue to supply it, and that Madeley may still be a part of the circuit. If you please, I should be glad to be put down in the 'Minutes' as a supernumerary." Wesley, it is said, "could not bear this," and shared the emotion which prevailed around him. He did not give him nominally a supernumerary relation to the Conference, for the next year his name is put down for Chester circuit, which included Madeley. Turning to the preachers, Fletcher admonished them to feed faithfully the sheep of his parish flock when he should be no more.* He was now fast declining in health; in about six weeks he wrote to Ireland, at Bristol: "O let us trim our lamps, gird our loins, and prepare to escape to the heavenly shore, as Paul did when he saw the leaky ship ready to go to the bottom, and made himself ready to swim to the land. I keep in my sentry-box till Providence remove me; my situation is quite suited to my little strength; I may do as much or as little as I please, according to my weakness; and I have an advantage which I can have nowhere else in such a degree; my little field of action is just at my door, so that, if I happen to

* He built the chapel in Madeley Wood with his income from Switzerland, that the Methodists might have access to his people if, after his death, the parish incumbent should be hostile to them. It was also used for a charity-school, and in our day the Methodists have rebuilt it on a larger scale, and in a style of simple beauty, as a memorial of the good and great vicar.

overdo myself, I have but a step from my pulpit to my bed, and from my bed to my grave."

After a few months more he passed from his pulpit to his bed, and from his bed to his grave, we have seen how sublimely.*

Among the candidates admitted on probation this year was Melville Horne, whose name has already been mentioned as connected with the earliest missionary movements of the last century in England. He remained about three years in the itinerant ministry when he obtained orders in the Establishment; for both the Wesleyan and the Calvinistic Methodists encouraged the settlement of their preachers in the national Church, as a means of promoting its restoration to evangelical piety. Horne was made a chaplain at Sierra Leone; he preserved his Methodistic zeal, though not his Methodist orthodoxy; and, while a spectator of African heathenism, formed those views of Christian missions which he presented in his celebrated "Letters on Missions, addressed to the Protestant Ministers of the British Churches," and which have since given his name importance in the Christian world.

He wielded a powerful pen, and his eloquent earnestness stirred all classes of devout men in England. He rebuked with irresistible force the general neglect of foreign evangelization. "At the bar of Scripture and of conscience," he said, "fathers, brethren, ministers of Christ, in the presence of God I charge you, I charge myself, with betraying the grand interests of our Master by refusing to propagate his Gospel. I charge you with the habitual, open violation of Christ's command: 'Go, preach the Gospel to every creature.' Lastly, I charge you with doing this without shame, and almost without an effort to do the contrary. What moneys have we subscribed? What associations have we formed? What prayers have we offered up? What animated exhortations have we given to our flocks, and to one another, on the subject of missions?"

Though he had become a Churchman he retained his Methodistic catholicity. "It is not," he said, "Calvinism, it is not Arminianism, but Christianity that the missionary is to teach; it is not the hierarchy of the Church of England, it is not the principles of

* [Another matter which occupied the attention of Conference, was the denial of the doctrine of original sin by one of the preachers. Nicholas Manners, "a good but mistaken man," had agitated the Connexion on this subject. The Conference declared that no preacher who denied original sin could be allowed to preach among them. Manners was therefore expelled; afterwards went to America to try and propagate his views, but failed, and ultimately sank into obscurity.—E. E.]

Protestant Dissenters, that he has in view to propagate: his object is to serve the Church universal." His eloquent appeal prompted the first counsels which led to the formation of the London Missionary Society, now so powerful an agent in the spread of Christianity throughout the world.* "I was struck," says one of its founders, "with shame and remorse, and powerfully stimulated to desire that some measure might be adopted to procure a simultaneous movement of British Christians in this honourable service."† Haweis, one of the chaplains and executors of the Countess of Huntingdon, read the "Letters" on a journey to Brighton. They kindled his soul, and he publicly offered five hundred pounds for the equipment of the first missionaries; he wished a "general union of all denominations," that a broad basis might be laid for the enterprise. Eyre, Matthew Wilks, Bogue, and others, united their prayers and counsels for the purpose; the Evangelical Magazine discussed it; and soon meetings were held in London to give it effect. Thus did the missionary spirit of Methodism begin to assume a form outside the Wesleyan body, and its results are seen to-day on the outlines of nearly all the world. In the Wesleyan societies themselves the missionary movement had already commenced, as we shall hereafter see.

The name of Rev. James Creighton, A.B., also appears, for the first time, in the Minutes of this year. Like all the regular clergy who joined Wesley, he was received into full membership by the Conference without probation, and is placed with the Wesleys, Moore, Rankin, and others, among the appointments for London. He was a native of Cavan, Ireland, a student at Dublin University, was ordained by the Bishop of Kilmore, and appointed curate at his cathedral, with strict episcopal injunction to "say nothing about faith in his sermons," as that was considered Methodistical fanaticism. The study of the writings of Wesley and Fletcher led him to better views of religion. He had heard a Methodist itinerant in a barn near Callowhill, and from that day had no rest of conscience, till he apprehended aright the doctrine of faith, and found "peace in believing." While yet seeking for this clearer vision he suffered great distress of mind; he was without religious sympathy, having no counsellor who could instruct him from a personal experience of the mysteries of the divine life. He wrote letters to his clerical friends, but they stood aloof from him, as

* Ellis's Hist. of Lond. Miss. Society, vol. i. pp. 13—15. London: 1844.

† Memoir of Rev. John Townsend.

though he "were infected with the plague." His parishioners deemed him mad. "So that I was, indeed," he writes, "as a sparrow sitting alone upon the house-top."

It was not long before he was preaching in private houses within his own parish; the people began to be awakened from their moral torpor; conversions took place under his discourses, to the surprise of his hearers and himself; he extended his labours beyond his curacy, preached in barns, on ancient ruins, in old forts, in any place in which he could get access to the people. His fellow-clergymen now remonstrated against his course. "I never saw any fruits of my labour till I became irregular," was his reply, and he went forward. Without any direct relations with the Methodists, he had actually become one himself, itinerating as vigorously as any of them, and combining his converts into societies for their mutual guidance. His brother was converted, and became a class-leader to one of his little bands. The Papists attacked him, and sometimes attempted his life. Churchmen, and especially the clergy, were zealous against him, though he was filling their churches. At one place, he says, "when many began to be awakened I explained to them the nature of a society, and joined fourteen of them together the first night; to whom more and more joined almost every week, till after some time they were about fourscore. The greater part of these, in a little time, obtained remission of sins. Meantime the vicar of the parish sent for me, and threatened to complain to the bishop; adding, moreover, that if I, and those fellows who were itinerants, continued to go on thus the churches would soon be deserted. I replied, our preaching tended rather to bring men *into* the Church; that I must obey God rather than man, and therefore was determined to preach whenever and wherever it suited my convenience." Shortly after, many who had been Dissenters attended the hostile vicar's church, and received the sacrament from him. Creighton also sent two Papists to him to read their recantation, as a proof that the alleged irregularities were bringing men into, not driving them out of, the Church. But opposition now arose from another quarter. The Papists were enraged at his success, and mobbed him. Some of them one night waylaid his brother in order to murder him; but having intelligence of it, he returned by another way and escaped them. "The work flourished more and more after this," says the Methodist curate, "and I trust many of them stand fast to this day." In fine, the moral condition of the country and the Church was such that most awakened men, zealous to do immediate work for

the reformation of the people, seized upon nearly the same means of doing it. The practical spirit of Methodism, spreading almost everywhere in the United Kingdom, gave a singular uniformity, if not unity, to their labours and results. In 1781 and 1782 Creighton preached more or less in the seven counties, and rode and walked about four thousand miles. It was against his natural inclination, he says; but in the condition of the country he could not do otherwise with a good conscience; and he assures us that he suffered more fatigues and hardships, contempt and mockeries, than he would ever have endured "for all that this world can afford." In 1783 Wesley wrote to him inviting him to London; after a second invitation he "consented to go in the strength of the Most High." He took affecting leave of his parishioners, who now, after nearly fourteen years of his pastoral care, were a reformed community. They wept aloud under his last sermon, so that his voice could scarcely be heard. "I trust," he says, "that some of them will remember that day, even to eternity." On his route he met, in Dublin, with Fletcher and his excellent wife, "both," he says, "shining lights, flaming with the love of God and love to all mankind." He thus, in the outset, had a good introduction to the best class of Methodists.

On arriving in London he entered zealously into the prosecution of Wesley's views, preaching in his chapels, especially at City Road, administering the sacrament to the Methodist societies, making excursions into the neighbouring counties, and editing the Arminian Magazine. A presbyter of the Church of England, he assisted Wesley in the ordination of Dr. Coke for America: he shared also in most if not all the other ordinations among the Methodists. He was steadfast to Methodism till, in 1820, he departed to his eternal rest, in the eighty-third year of his age.*

Matthias Joyce was also admitted into full membership, in the Conference of the present year, without having been previously recorded as a candidate, but not without having been well tested by itinerant labours in Ireland, through the usual term of probation. He was an interesting example of the power of religion; a Papist, a fugitive, a vagabond, steeped in vice and ignorance, with barely a trace of the moral sense remaining; making incredible hairbreadth escapes from accidents and perils, which were the result of his habits, though he ascribed them to a particular and pertinacious malice of the devil, which he stoutly but humbly resented through

* Memoirs of Several Wesleyan Preachers, edited by the Rev. P. P. Sandford. New York: 1843.

his subsequent Christian life; for, after a career of youthful self-abandonment, he became as devout and pure as he had been corrupt, and lived, through thirty years of ministerial labour and self-sacrifice, an example of the highest teachings of the Gospel, "a man," said his brethren, recording his death, "of a remarkably loving and peaceable disposition, a wise, acceptable, and successful preacher," "a brother whose memory is precious to all who knew him." Such an example is historically legitimate to our narrative, not merely on account of his long career of ministerial labours, but as an illustration of the power of Methodism over the worst class of men. He has narrated his singular "experience" in a letter to Wesley,* which is scarcely less interesting for its frank simplicity and quaintness, than for its extraordinary revelations of character. The only instance of compunction in early life which he records, was for cursing his mother, with a terrible oath, after a well-deserved chastisement; but, being a Papist, he appeased his conscience by recollecting that he had heard among the Romanists that a child cannot be charged with voluntary guilt before it is fully seven years old! With all his vices, however, he had the obstinacy, if not the virtue, to keep through life a covenant he made with a playmate in his tenth year, never again to use profane language. When fourteen years old he was apprenticed to a printer, "but ran," he says, "into greater excess of riot than before." His employer corrected him terribly, shivering at one time an oak staff upon his head; but such was his obstinacy that he "was sure he would not have submitted if he had fallen dead at his feet." Before he was fifteen years of age he came near murdering the child of his master with a pair of shears; when nineteen he ran away from his home with a fellow-servant, to enlist on board a man-of-war, and made an attempt to kill himself, which would have been successful had he not been thrown down by the bystanders and the knife wrenched from his hand. His father, when seventy years old, wept over him, entreating him to be faithful to his business, but he escaped, regardless of the tears and infirmities of the heart-broken old man. He crossed the channel, and, reaching Liverpool, wandered on foot with his fellow-fugitive to Birmingham. There he met a fellow-countryman who was returning to Ireland, and who induced him to retrace his steps. With threepence in the pocket of one, and fivepence in that of the other, they walked on their route, lodging with gipsies, wearied, hungry, and wretched. His companion begged on the way, or sung songs for bread; he himself was too

* Arminian Magazine, 1786, p. 132.

proud, he says, to descend so low, but kept up his self-esteem at the expense of his stomach. When near Chester he sank under fatigue and hunger: on rising to enter the city, with swollen feet and sore joints, he had to get first upon one knee and then upon the other; "however, by degrees," he writes, "with excessive pain I got on my feet and crept forward." A poor man, struck with compassion at his pitiable plight, lodged and fed him, but could afford him no other relief. He sold his waistcoat for three shillings, by the help of a poor woman who washed his feet and his handkerchief, and wept at the tale of his forlorn adventures. Many a touching example does he give, though artlessly and without design, of such traits of generous humanity among the lowest people whom he encountered; proofs of purest tenderness in the rudest natures. He re-embarked at Liverpool, for Dublin, with tenpence in his pocket, the remnant of his three shillings. A furious storm overtook the vessel, an alarm spread among the passengers; some of them attempted to pray, "while I, hardened wretch," he says, "was highly diverted." But at the height of the gale, when he expected the vessel to go to pieces, he too was terrified; he crept "on his knees into a dark corner, and uttered a few heartless petitions." His father paid his passage at Dublin, and rescued him from the captain, who had imprisoned him on board because of his inability to pay it. He returned his parent's kindness by quarrelling with him, and was "fully determined to give him blow for blow." He now describes himself as growing worse and worse; in two weeks he was horsewhipped by his employer, and again attempted to escape, but failed; he became a gambler, and attempted to murder the son of his master, whom he had seduced into that vice; he sank into drunkenness, and barely escaped death from a pleurisy occasioned by the habit, and on recovering he forthwith flew again to the bottle. His master declared himself tired of beating him, and pronounced him utterly irreclaimable; "and well he might," says Joyce, "if there was no God, for it was beyond the power of man to turn the stream of my affections."

Such are some illustrations of the degradation, the moral ruin of Matthias Joyce, shocking to narrate, and yet affording hope perchance to many a heart-broken parent who may have despaired of his prodigal child. What could reclaim this reprobate youth? Could any inflictions of law, any conventional sentiments of honour; could even any of the ordinary formalities of public religion? Let Methodism glory in at least the humble honour of plucking such

brands from the burning when every thing else seemed ineffective; for all over the United Kingdom could it point to such witnesses, renewed by its power, and sitting, clothed and in their right minds, at the feet of its laborious and persecuted teachers.

John Wesley came across the path of this wretched young man. Curiosity led him to go with the crowd to hear the famous preacher. He describes himself as in such heathenish, not to call it papal darkness, that he could not understand what even Wesley, in his simple speech, had to say, and he "went away as ignorant as he came." But there was something in the scene, something in the aspect of the venerable apostle, that touched his depraved heart. "As soon as I came home," he writes, "my heart clove to him; his hoary hairs and grave deportment commanded my respect, and gained my affections." One of those acts of simple tenderness toward children, which have been mentioned as characteristic of Wesley, added to the effect of his apostolic appearance, for there were some traces of common humanity still in this wreck of the human soul: "what endeared him still more to me," says Joyce, "was seeing him stoop down and kiss a little child that stood on the stairs." His curiosity, at least, was now awakened to hear the Methodists, and he frequented their chapels. In a few months he was on his knees on the stairs of the printing-office, calling upon God in prayer. "The Lord God," he says, "appeared in terrible majesty, and Mount Sinai seemed to be in a flame. His voice thundered from the dreadful mount, and spoke in terror to my inmost soul, which made me tremble exceedingly. The Holy Ghost showed me the spirituality of the law in such a manner that I saw and felt my inward parts were very wickedness. For some time I was quite dumb, and wondered that I was so great a monster. O what heart can conceive the exquisite distress of my soul at this moment! I groaned, being burdened with a deep sense of the wrath of God. I saw myself just on the brink of hell. I thought I was undone for ever, and despaired of ever being saved."

A fellow-apprentice, who had been his companion in vice, joined the Methodist society with him, and a few months later all the men employed by his master, together with their wives, joined it also. A prolonged and terrible self-conflict had the poor prodigal, "tossed about on billows of temptation, and distressed by heart-piercing convictions." He wandered in the fields, and got into secret places to "pour out his complaints before God." Utterly reckless before, he now became even morbidly scrupulous; he seized on books, and, when he met with one which treated of faith,

searched it with as much eagerness as a man perishing through hunger would grasp at a piece of bread; for the doctrine of justification by faith, which now dawned upon his dark mind, offered him the only hope of escape from his enormous guilt. Watchfulness against temptation, prayerfulness, delicacy of conscience, all the tender sensibilities of the new-born Christian life, were now manifest in his reclaimed soul. He walked diffidently in his new faith, fearing to claim too much, sometimes doubting sadly; but "there came along an old professor from the country, who was very fond of encouraging those who were of a doubtful mind," and who, on first seeing the young convert, "took a liking to him." Their conversations were continually about divine truth, and especially about faith. "I believe," said the old Methodist, "you do not doubt that God is able to save you; but you do not believe he is willing." As soon as he uttered these words, "the power of God," writes Joyce, "rested upon me in a remarkable manner; all my doubts and fears vanished, and I was filled with faith and love. I could now no longer contain, but immediately cried out, 'O yes, I believe he is willing to save me! and I see so much love in his heart toward me, that I should be the most ungrateful wretch in the world if I doubted his love any longer.'"

It is well that such a personal history should be related with this particularity—for this is Methodism; this is Christianity; this "the regeneration." It is both the illustration and the lesson of Methodism.

He applied himself now to study; he read late at night, and was at his books by five in the morning. His fastings and self-denials became excessive, and for a time proved injurious; but his developing mind soon corrected these errors. Fletcher's treatise on Christian Perfection, in his Last Check to Antinomianism, led him into the "deep things of God," and he lived and died a witness of them.

Ten years after the degraded Papist, Matthias Joyce, first heard John Wesley in Dublin, a letter came from the latter directing him to forsake all, and go to preach the Gospel on Limerick circuit, for he had already a good reputation as a local preacher. He procured a horse, and went on his way rejoicing, yet fearing. Not a few sore trials did he now encounter. As he entered Cashel, the first town on his circuit, one of those spiteful tricks of the great "adversary," as he deemed them, gave him a bad augury; his horse tripped, and threw him forward in the mud on the street; a notorious drunkard, passing at the moment, generously helped him up, and, learning his errand, led him to a Methodist family; but, bruised,

covered with dirt, and with a well-known tippler for a companion, the family were disposed to repel him as a drunkard himself before the necessary explanation could be made. "Satan," says the good man, "was angry with me, but the God of my life overruled his malice." Often did his modesty, a virtue he had never known before he became a Christian, embarrass him in his new office, and at one time he actually turned his horse homeward with a sinking heart, resolved to preach no more; but a Methodist providentially met him on the way and deterred him, and his pious wife, though left alone at a distance, and suffering much from his absence, wrote him a letter worthy of her. "Are you afraid of the devil, who is himself held in chains by your Master?" she asked: "Is not God on your side? Then fear not. This temptation is for the trial of your faith. The Lord will make your cup to overflow after it, and bless you in his own way." He returned to his circuit. Two years later he wrote to Wesley: "When riding in the midst of my pain, which was often beyond expression, I have been constrained to cry, 'O the honour of being an ambassador for Christ!' So many precious smiles of his face have rested upon me, while travelling round my circuit, that every cross was light, every rough way smooth, and every crooked place straight."

And so Matthias Joyce took his honourable place, the present year, in the Conference; and, always afterward warring a good warfare, lived to be venerated as a veteran in the ministry, and died lamented by his fellow-labourers; "died," they tell us, "an Israelite in whom was no guile."

The Conference for 1785 began in London, July 26: 20 candidates were received on trial; 4 probationers were admitted to membership; 8 retired; one had died since the last session; 211 received appointments, among whom is named Freeborn Garrettson, whose field was Nova Scotia—a man of conspicuous importance in the after-history of Methodism.

The circuits amounted to 79, including Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Antigua. The membership was reported at 52,431 in Great Britain and Ireland; 300 in Nova Scotia; and 1100 blacks and 8 whites in Antigua; the aggregate being 53,839; the increase in England and Ireland, 3262.

The contributions to the three Conference funds amounted to £2021.

About seventy preachers attended this session, all of them by particular invitation from Wesley.* Perfect harmony prevailed in

* Wesley's Journal, July, 1785, Works, vol. iv.

their deliberations. John Pawson, Thomas Hanby, and Joseph Taylor, were ordained by Wesley to administer the sacraments in Scotland. One of the reasons assigned for this measure was, "the absolute necessity of the case, as the Scotch ministers had repeatedly refused to give the Methodists the sacraments unless they would leave the societies." * To counteract the misrepresentations of disaffected preachers, respecting the Deed of Declaration, papers were signed by all the attending members, approving that document, and declaring that Wesley had provided it at the unanimous request of a previous Conference.†

On the 25th July, 1786, began in Bristol the forty-third Conference. About eighty preachers were present; three sessions were held each day, beginning at six o'clock in the morning; 39 candidates were received on probation; 6 probationers were admitted to membership; 7 ceased to travel; 2 had died since the preceding session; 238 received appointments.

The circuits now amounted to 88, including Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Antigua.

The membership was reported at 58,156 in Great Britain and Ireland; 2179 in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Antigua; the aggregate being 60,335. The increase in Great Britain and Ireland was 5725. The Minutes give, though erroneously, the membership in America at 19,271; it amounted to 20,681;‡ and the aggregate membership was 81,016. The Conference collections amounted to £1968.

The relation of the Methodists to the Church was discussed at this session: "we all," says Wesley, "determined to remain therein, without one dissenting voice." §

He appended to the Minutes, however, a statement justificatory of his "irregularities." "I have," he concedes, "in some respects varied, though not from the doctrines, yet from the discipline of the Church of England, although not willingly, but by constraint." Field-preaching, the formation of Societies, and his own administration of the sacraments to them from the beginning, his annual Conferences, his ordinations for America and for Scotland, are referred to as alleged examples. "These," he says, "are the steps

* Myles's Chron. Hist. of the Methodists, chap. 7.

† [In the minutes of this Conference appears for the first time the name of Alexander Kilham, the founder of the "Kilhamites," better and more correctly known as the "New Connexion Methodists."—E. E.]

‡ Minutes of M. E. Church, (1786,) vol. i. New York: 1840.

§ Journal, July, 1786, Works, vol. iv.

which, not of choice but of necessity, I have slowly and deliberately taken. If any one is pleased to call this separating from the Church, he may. But the law of England does not call it so; nor can any one be properly said so to do, unless out of conscience he refuses to join in the service, and partake of the sacraments administered therein." He still wished, then, to maintain his adherence to the Church, so far as he could without sacrificing his obvious duty. As the latter was paramount with him, he committed these acknowledged irregularities, and was now prepared to go even farther; for he adds to the Minutes of this year a concession which he had never before allowed—permission to hold "service in Methodist chapels during church hours" in places where the clergy were notoriously wicked, or dangerously heretical; as also where there were not churches enough in the town to accommodate half the people; and lastly, where there was no church within two or three miles. Evidently he foresaw the coming virtual separation of his people from the Establishment, and was wisely disposed to make what gradual preparation for it might be necessary, while he nevertheless postponed it as long as he could. He admits that "undoubtedly" there may be such a separation "after his death, but," he adds, "what I said at our first Conference, above forty years ago, I say still: I dare not omit doing what good I can while I live, for fear of evils that may follow when I am dead." He believed that the Methodist movement was a providential fact; that his connexion with it was a providential responsibility; that it was not his duty to set off his Churchmanship against the necessities of the movement as they were providentially thrust upon him; and that the Providence which required his irregularities would take care of their results. If in this policy he proved not his English Churchmanship, he proved his English common-sense, and, above all, his integrity to his conscience.

He again enjoined upon his preachers to maintain the early morning service, "at least in all large towns;" "to see that none sing too slow, that the women sing their parts, and to exhort all to sing, all to stand at singing, and all to kneel at prayers."

Among the nearly forty preachers received on trial at this session was William Bramwell,* whose memoirs have rendered his name familiar throughout the Methodist world. His early education was limited to the advantages afforded by the village school of Elswich, Lancashire, where he was born in 1759. His parents trained him to religious habits, and from his childhood he was inclined

* [Father of the present Baron Bramwell.]

to piety. He was apprenticed to a currier at Preston, where his exemplary life secured him general respect, but could not satisfy the demands of his conscience. He sought relief by austerities which only increased his sufferings; he would bow for hours, with his knees bare, on sand which he spread on the floor, confessing his sins and repeating his prayers. He spent his holidays meditating in the solitude of woods; he fasted, and watched, and took solitary walks throughout the night. After protracted struggles he received better views of faith, while partaking of the Lord's Supper at the church of Preston.

Hitherto he had known little about the Methodists; he distrusted their teachings, but was led by one of them to hear an itinerant preacher, who addressed a congregation of twelve persons. Probably the evangelist desponded at the small prospect of usefulness in such an audience; but he was not aware that there sat in the little group a youth who was to lead thousands into the Church and into heaven. At the next meeting Bramwell joined the society. But he was not yet assured of his acceptance with God. Wesley passed through Preston. "Dear brother," said the patriarch, as he took the hand of the young disciple, "can you praise God?" "No, sir," was his reply. "Well, perhaps you can to-night," rejoined Wesley, lifting his hands and smiling upon the doubting youth. That night, while the service was proceeding, the light of God's countenance was lifted upon him, and he never again lost it. His parents, though devout in their way, were hostile to the Methodists, and entreated him to flee from the fanatics. It was expected that they would establish him in business, for they possessed some property; they now threatened to withhold all assistance from him, but they could not shake his resolution.

He was soon active in religious labours; he conducted prayer meetings at five o'clock in the morning, for the accommodation of working people; he became a class-leader, and by his instrumentality such a religious interest was excited in Preston that the Methodist society was quickly doubled. Wesley found, at his next visit to the town, a large preaching-house fitted up, and "the old prejudice quite forgotten." He could appreciate such a man as Bramwell, and the faithful labourer was called into the itinerant service. Before he went, however, he became deeply interested in the doctrine of Methodism respecting sanctification, a subject which was to be the chief theme of his ministry; he was convinced, he says, of his necessity of entire purity, and sought it carefully with

tears, and prayers, and self-sacrifice, yet found it not; for he sought it not by "faith," but by "the works of the law." While sitting alone in the house of a friend, meditating and praying, "heaven," he says, "came down to earth; it came to my soul. The Lord, for whom I had waited, came suddenly to the temple of my heart, and I had an immediate evidence that this was the blessing I had for some time been seeking. My soul was then all wonder, love, and praise." About twenty-six years later he writes: "I have walked in this liberty ever since. Glory be to God! I have been kept by his power. I stand by faith." The records of Methodism are crowded with examples of saintly living; but, from among them all, no instance of profounder piety can be cited than that of William Bramwell.

Thus furnished for every good word and work, he entered upon his travels as a preacher in 1785, and in the present year was received by the Conference. For more than thirty years he was one of the most successful preachers of English Methodism. He was a "revivalist" in the best sense of the term. His energy was tireless, his understanding masculine, his decision of character unswerving, his voice singularly musical, his command over the passions of his hearers absolute.*

He was nearly six feet high, and robust; his features were large, strong, and dark, like those of a bronze statue, and his eye "piercing as an eagle's." He was ascetic; an early riser for study and prayer; reading much, studying more, and praying most. He acquired a knowledge of the Greek Scriptures, was conversant with the French language, and translated a good work from it on preaching. He was scrupulous to a fault, and charitable to excess, giving even the clothes from his person to the poor. The quickness and clearness of his discriminations of character were marvellous, and led both himself and his friends to suppose that he possessed the power of "discerning spirits." Few men could tell an illustrative anecdote in the pulpit with greater effect; few had such mighty prevalence in prayer; few such control over public assemblies, especially in scenes of religious excitement, repressing excesses, awing opposers, directing the methods of labour, and constraining all things according to his own will. Few men, perhaps no man of his day, gathered more converts into the communion of Methodism.†

The Conference for 1787 began on the 31st July at Manchester.

* Wesleyan Centenary Takings, p. 42.

† See Memoirs of Rev. William Bramwell, by Rev. Thomas Harris.

A great increase was shown in most of the statistics of the body; 32 candidates were received on trial; 5 probationers were admitted to membership; 5 members had died since the last session; 261 received appointments; the number of circuits recorded was 100. The collections amounted to £2233.

The membership reported was 65,040; the increase being 4705; the membership in the United States was 25,347; the increase, 4666. The aggregate membership amounted to 90,387; the aggregate increase to 9371.

Anthems were now prohibited in the chapels. because they did not admit of joint worship; for Methodism always insisted on congregational singing. It was decided that no preachers should be sent to circuits which would not provide for their support, except in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and a few feeble appointments in England. Wesley, assisted by two presbyters of the Church of England, ordained at this session Alexander Mather, Thomas Rankin, and Henry Moore, and subsequently ordained Mather as a superintendent or bishop. Hitherto his ordinations had been for America and Scotland; he had hesitated to ordain men for England; but the late rapid growth of Methodism, the multiplication of chapels in all parts of the land, with a ministerial force of more than two hundred and fifty travelling preachers, increased the demand of the people for the sacraments from their own pastors. His own death seemed at hand, and it devolved upon him to provide for the uncertain future. The time had come therefore for another step forward, and these men *were ordained for England*. He earnestly advised them, however, that in accordance with his own example they should "continue united to the Established Church," but only "so far as the work in which they were engaged would permit."* The re-ordination of Mather as a bishop was significant; he was a man of commanding sense, courage, and dignity, and Wesley evidently believed that, while he could be trusted to use his extraordinary powers with wisdom, he would not hesitate to use them also with the energy which any future emergency might require.

Another measure was also now found necessary, which, if it did not amount to an actual separation from the Establishment, was too equivocal to admit of legal definition. Legal consultation had convinced Wesley that his preachers and chapels were not safe from the penalties of the barbarous Conventicle Act, unless they should be licensed under the statutes provided for the protection of

* Myles's Chronological History, chap. 7.

persons "dissenting from the Church of England."* He therefore adopted measures for their security by having most of them licensed though not professedly "as Dissenters,† but as simply preachers of the Gospel."

Thus was Methodism led on, step after step, in its own providential route, in spite of all the personal sympathies or prejudices of its founder for the national Establishment. But its claim for shelter under the act of Toleration was too ambiguous to protect it from severe persecutions in Somersetshire and elsewhere. Some magistrates and bishops refused to license its preachers and chapels, if its people scrupled not to receive the sacraments at the Church. Poor members of the societies were fined twenty pounds each, and their goods distrained to pay the fine, for holding meetings in their own houses. Wesley remonstrated in the most eloquent and affecting letters that he ever wrote, with two of the prelates who were responsible for these persecutions,‡ and they soon ceased. He had himself become the evangelical Primate of the realm, and his cause was now too formidable for such opposition, though his ambiguous relation to the church challenged it.

Among the names subsequently distinguished in the history of Methodism, but which now appeared for the first time in the Minutes, are those of Richard Reece, Joseph Entwisle, and Peard Dickinson.

For many years Richard Reece moved among the societies, venerated as a patriarch. He was active in the itinerancy fifty-nine years; he became the oldest effective Methodist preacher in the world; he took a supernumerary relation to the Conference as late as 1846, and died in peace in 1850, in his eighty-fifth year.§

* Act of Toleration; first of William and Mary, and nineteenth of George III.

† The form of petition or "certificate" by which the licence was obtained, expressly claimed it by "virtue of the statute for exempting Protestant subjects, *dissenting from the Church of England*, from the penalties of certain laws."—See Myles's Chron. Hist. chap. 7. See also Wesley's Journal, Nov. 3, 1787; and Moore's Life of Wesley, book viii. chap. 4.

‡ Moore's Life of Wesley, book viii. chap. 4.

§ "Mr. Reece travelled without interruption, for a longer period than any other Methodist preacher—no less than fifty-nine years. Those who came nearest to him in the duration of their itinerant labours were Thomas Taylor, of the British Conference, and George Pickering of the New England Conference, each of whom completed fifty-six years. The next longest is Richard Waddy, of the British Conference, who was an effective preacher fifty-three years."—Sketches of Wesleyan Preachers, by Robert A. West. London: 1849. See also Wesl. Mag., 1850, p. 652.

The last entry in his journal, on removing from London a short time before his death, reads: "One more remove remains—to 'the house appointed for all living.' My hope is joyous, glory to Christ." His last words were: "Pardon—accept—heal—complete. He pardons—accepts—accepts." He was a good, if not a great preacher, and a most amiable man. He is still generally remembered, by both English and American Methodists, for his perfect courtesy and his venerable appearance. His person was tall, his complexion ruddy, his head silvered with age, his voice commanding, his language flowing and pertinent, his piety tranquil, and his wisdom in counsel always reliable. He lived to share in the centenary celebration of Methodism, and by proposing that it should be signalized in England by the contribution of two hundred thousand pounds for its public charities, excited the suspicion that his usual good judgment had suffered from the effect of age; but the people justified his calculation by giving fifteen thousand pounds more. He was honoured with an election to the presidency of the Conference, and was, with his colleague John Hannah, the first of those representatives of English Methodism, in the General Conference of American Methodism, which have maintained the formal intercourse of the two bodies.

Joseph Entwisle was a worthy contemporary and companion of Richard Reece. Devout from his youth, naturally genial, and with scarcely a noticeable defect of character, unless it were the enviable one of an excess of charity; highly evangelical as a preacher; as a counsellor a peacemaker, both by his good sense and his good temper, he lived, like Reece, to be one of the venerated elders in the gates of the Methodist Israel. Beginning his itinerant ministrations this year,* he immediately became popular as the "boy preacher," and continued to labour until 1841, when he departed by a serene death to his eternal reward, a veteran of seventy-five years, during sixty of which the light of the Divine countenance shone around him like a halo. Fifty-four years he was a faithful and, most of the time, a prominent preacher. He was twice elected president of the Conference. He survived most of his first ministerial brethren, and at the Conference of the year in which he died, found present, among five hundred preachers, but one besides himself who had attended the session of the present year, and that one was his fellow-patriarch and friend, Richard

* There is some confusion in the insertions of his name in the old Minutes. It appears by mistake in 1784 as William Entwisle: being then but seventeen years old, he was induced to delay his ministerial travels. It appears again in 1785, but he did not take an appointment till 1787.

Reece. "Since that time," he wrote, "many hundreds of our brethren have departed this life; but, blessed be God! there is a succession of faithful men raised up. *My* world is dead, and *my* course will soon end." He went home to die, and in about three months was with his old fellow-labourers in heaven.*

Peard Dickinson, a presbyter of the Church of England, appears this year in the list of appointments for London, without the usual probation. He was born in 1758, in Devonshire, where his father held an office under the government, and possessed considerable landed property. From his early childhood he was religiously inclined, and desired to study for the Church; but he was sent to Bristol while yet a youth, to prepare for a mercantile life. There he found that his hostess was a Methodist. He accompanied her to Wesley's society, and soon joined it. After a long period of severe mental suffering, he obtained the "peace in believing" which was professed by his new Christian associates. "One morning," he says, "after I had continued in prayer till I was near fainting, the Spirit of God descended like lightning from heaven; and bare witness with my spirit that I was his adopted child. I looked up to heaven with confidence, and from this moment had a clear and divine evidence of the pardoning love of God, whom I was now emboldened to consider as my Father in Jesus reconciled. My soul now flew with ardour to the ordinances of my God. The name of Jesus was as ointment poured forth. His titles, his character, his offices, appeared unspeakably lovely and glorious. 'My Lord and my God, my Jesus and my all,' was the language of my heart unceasingly."† His disposition to enter the ministry now revived, and he was sent by his father to Oxford, where he honourably graduated, and immediately after was settled as the assistant of Perronet, at Shoreham. During his residence at Oxford he had maintained his relations with Wesley, receiving him at the college occasionally, and spending his vacations with him in London. At Shoreham he laboured two years zealously with Perronet to promote the Methodistic revival, leading classes, preaching in the workhouse and neighbouring villages, as well as in the church, and diligently visiting from house to house; but, at the death of the aged vicar, he was superseded by an unevangelical successor, who was presented to the living, contrary to the wishes of the parish, by the prebend, to whom the right of presentation belonged. He was subsequently called by Wesley to London, where, with Creighton, he ministered to the metropolitan Methodist societies through the remainder of his life.

* Memoirs of Rev. Joseph Entwisle. By his Son. London: 1848.
† Memoirs of Rev. Peard Dickinson, Jackson's Christian Biography.

Both these clergymen co-operated heartily in Wesley's plans, and were his assistant presbyters in his ordinations.

One inestimable blessing, at least, survived to him from Shoreham; he married the granddaughter of Perronet, who had, as we have seen, closed in death the eyes of the aged saint. Dickinson could afterwards write: "It is now between eleven and twelve years since our hands were joined together, during which time we have enjoyed an uninterrupted state of happiness, so kindly hath God dealt with us even in this state of trial!" In London he was constantly employed, preaching, visiting the sick, attending prayer-meetings, classes, bands, love-feasts, watch-nights, and quarterly meetings. With a profound piety bordering on mysticism, a holiness of heart which enabled him to maintain, amid his indefatigable outward activities, a realm of peaceful solitude within, where his spirit dwelt quietly with God, he pursued his course down to the year 1802, when he departed to heaven by a death of remarkable triumph. "I shall go to the upper courts," he said to the group at his bedside. "'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?' Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." Addressing his wife, he added: "The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade on thy right hand; the Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; he shall preserve thy soul: I speak this to you, my dear." To one of his attendants he remarked: "I have not a shadow of doubt; my evidence is as clear as the noonday sun! I have nothing but glory and heaven in my view; my heart is full of God; my cup runneth over!" Having had a very severe convulsion, and being extremely weak, he said, "What a mercy it is that the Lord careth for the righteous!" A friend replied, "He does, and it shall be well with them." "Yes," said the dying man, "well for ever and ever: glory be to God!" "My dear love, sweet is thy voice to me; God bless you!" were the last words he spoke to his wife. An attendant conversed with him. "Stop!" he exclaimed; "say nothing but—Glory! glory!" the last words he ever spoke.

The forty-fifth Conference began its session in London on the 29th of July, 1788; 30 candidates were received on probation;*

* One of these was John Hickling, who survived till 1859—the last of Wesley's "helpers." He had preached more than seventy years, and, though ninety-three years old when he died, his services during his last three years averaged three each week; and when he lay dead, he was announced by printed handbills for no less than six special occasions.

5 probationers were admitted to membership; 7 members had died during the ecclesiastical year; 5 ceased to travel; 278 received appointments, including 5 missionaries who were sent to the West Indies.

The circuits and mission stations were reported at 105. The collections amounted to £2405. The number of members was 70,510; the increase was 5470. The number in the United States was 27,333; the increase 1986. The aggregate membership was 97,843; the aggregate increase 7456.

It was ordered at this session that no chapel should be built till it was settled on the Conference plan, and a form of deed for that purpose was prescribed. Another step toward the independence of the Methodist societies was also now taken. "Assistants" were allowed to read the Liturgy in the chapels on Sunday mornings, if a majority of the people acquiesced, and service was prohibited in "Church hours" only on Sundays when the Lord's Supper should be administered in the parish churches; but the people were to be strenuously exhorted to receive the sacrament at the latter on such occasions. The relation of Methodism to the Church was considered at this session. Wesley says that the sum of a long conversation was, first, that in a course of fifty years they had neither premeditatedly nor willingly varied from it in one article of doctrine or discipline; second, that they were not yet conscious of varying from it in any point of doctrine; third, that they had, in a course of years, out of necessity, not choice, slowly and warily varied in some points of discipline, by preaching in the fields, by extemporary prayer, by employing lay preachers, by forming and regulating societies, and by holding yearly Conferences. "But," he adds, "we did none of these things till we were convinced we could no longer omit them but at the peril of our souls."* He held a Conference with his Irish preachers in Dublin before the next regular session in England, and says in his Journal, that he had never had between forty and fifty such preachers together in Ireland before; all of them apparently alive to God, and earnestly devoted to his service; and that he never saw such a number of preachers before so unanimous in all points, particularly as to leaving the Church, which none of them had the least thought of. "It is no wonder," he continues, "that there has been this year so large an increase of the society. Such a body of men I hardly believed could have been found together in Ireland; men of such sound experience, such deep piety, and such strong understanding. I am convinced they

* Journal, August, 1788. Works, vol. iv.

are in no way inferior to the English Conference, except it be in number."

On the 28th of July, 1789, the forty-sixth session began in Leeds; 25 candidates were admitted on trial; 18 probationers were admitted to membership; 4 retired; and 4 had died in the ecclesiastical year; 289 received appointments. The number of circuits and mission stations was 109, omitting Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. The collections amounted to £2403. The number of members in the societies was 74,254, not including those of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, which were not reported. The increase in Great Britain and Ireland was 3744.

Among the regulations adopted at this Conference, it was ordered that the Rules of the United Society should be read quarterly in every society; that no person should be admitted to love-feasts without a society-ticket, or a note from the "assistant" or preacher in charge; that all moneys collected at love-feasts should be "most conscientiously" given to the poor; that all preachers should be home by nine o'clock at night, and of course evening meetings were to be concluded in time for the purpose.

The case of Dewsbury chapel, already mentioned, occupied much of the attention of the Conference, and was met by Wesley with characteristic decision. That edifice had been built by contributions from several Methodist societies; but the trustees, apparently incapable, as has at some other times been the case, of appreciating the importance of maintaining the connectional and itinerant principles of Methodism, refused to settle the property according to the prescribed deed, and claimed the right of receiving or refusing the preachers sent to them from the Conference; an example which, if generally followed, would destroy the effective energy of Methodism. All explanations and remonstrances from Wesley, and from repeated committees of the Conference, failed to convince them of their error. Two of his preachers joined the trustees, and took charge of the society; only two members of the latter remained steadfast to Methodism. The Conference could not sanction so perilous a precedent, and called upon the Connection to contribute moneys for the erection of a new chapel, which was forthwith done, the preachers themselves giving no less than £208. The two recusant preachers spread disaffection around them, and organized societies in Shields, Newcastle, and other towns; but all finally failed. The firm example of the Conference was most salutary, and is worthy to be remembered every where by Methodists who have learned well enough the lesson of their history not to be

willing that the general good should be sacrificed to local convenience, or rather local selfishness. The preachers not only subscribed generously for the new church, but one hundred and fifteen of them (all who were present) signed a declaration reaffirming their approval of the deed for the security of chapels.

On the 27th of July, 1790, began at Bristol the forty-seventh Conference, the last at which Wesley presided. At this session 23 candidates were received on probation; 19 were admitted to membership; 1 had died since the last Conference; 2 retired; 313 were recorded on the roll of the appointments. The circuits and mission stations amounted to 119, including again Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. The three financial returns reached the sum of £2828.

The members of societies were now 76,813; the increase was 2559.* The members in the United States this year amounted to 57,631; their increase to 14,361, the greatest yet reported. Methodism in the new republic was now fast gaining numerically on that of Great Britain.

Its aggregate statistics in both hemispheres were: Circuits, 233; travelling preachers, 540; members, 134,444.†

Such was the numerical strength of Methodism when Wesley, bending under the weight of eighty-seven years, took his last leave of his assembled preachers in the same city where, more than half a century before, he formed his first "band" and erected his first chapel. The scene must have been impressive to the venerable man, and sad, though grateful, to the hearts of his itinerants. "At this Conference," says one of them, "I parted with Mr. Wesley, to see him no more until the resurrection of the just. He appeared very feeble; his eyesight had failed so much that he could not see to give out the hymns; yet his voice was strong, his spirit remarkably lively, and the powers of his mind, and his love toward his fellow-creatures, were as bright and as ardent as ever." ‡

Seldom, in history, has an individual life been more complete in its results than was that of Wesley at this moment. No prelate of the land, no Englishman whatever, save the sovereign himself, swayed a wider or more profound popular power. No man travelled more extensively among the people, or oftener revisited them

* This includes, however, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, which were not reported at the preceding session.

† This statement materially differs, in each particular, from Dr. Smith's summary, in his account of the last Conference of Wesley (Hist. of Meth., vol. i. p. 571). His American figures are those of the preceding year.

‡ Charles Atmore, Wesleyan Magazine 1845, p. 123.

in their towns and villages; no man spoke to more of them daily, or had done so during the last half century. His life had not only been thoroughly sustained, but its results were already thoroughly organized, and rendered apparently as effective and permanent as human achievements can be. His power could now, in any necessity, reach almost any part of the three kingdoms by the systematic apparatus of Methodism. His orders, given to his "assistants," who were dispersed through the land, could be conveyed by them to his three hundred preachers, who were continually hastening, like couriers, over their long circuits; by these they could be impressed on about twelve hundred local preachers, who, with the itinerants, could convey them to about four thousand stewards and class-leaders, and these, by the private but established means of the societies, could bring them directly to the more than seventy thousand members.* Such a power, created by himself without prestige, but now wielded with a prestige which secured grateful and almost implicit obedience from his people, would have been perilous in the hands of a weak or selfish man, but in what one historical respect did he abuse it?

Methodism had not only established itself among the masses of the English and American population; we have seen by occasional glimpses, that it was extending to the smaller British Isles, and to France, to the West Indies, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia. Its introduction into these fields was attended by those providential and often romantic incidents which marked its success elsewhere. Before we turn to the solemn crisis now at hand in its history, let us cast a few glances at some of these lateral scenes of its outgrowth.

* I give the estimates of Whitehead, who was an active Methodist at this time. Life of Wesley vol. ii. book iii. chap. 6. The membership in the United Kingdom alone, at this time, amounted to 71,463.

CHAPTER XI.

METHODISM IN THE BRITISH ISLES, FRANCE, NOVA SCOTIA, NEWFOUNDLAND, AND THE WEST INDIES.

The Isle of Man—John Crook's Labours and Trials there—Wesley visits the Island—Great success of Methodism—The Channel Isles—Remarkable Introduction of Methodism among them—Pierre Le Sueur—Robert Carr Brackenbury—Alexander Kilham—Adam Clarke's Persecutions—Jean de Quetteville—His Trials and Success—Adam Clarke at Alderney—Wesley and Coke visit the Islands—Results—Extraordinary Introduction of Methodism into France—De Quetteville, Mahy, and Coke visit it—De Pontavice—His services and happy Death—William Toase among the Prison Ships of the Medway—Resumption of the Mission in France—Dr. Charles Cook—His Services to French Protestantism—Extent of Methodism in France—Extent of Protestantism—The Isle of Wight—The "Dairyman's Daughter"—Sketch of her Life—Joseph Sutcliffe introduces Methodism into the Scilly Isles—William Black—Methodism in Nova Scotia—Freeborn Garrettson—Lawrence Coughland, Founder of Methodism in Newfoundland—Providential Introduction of Methodism into the West Indies—Coke at Sea—Nathaniel Gilbert—John Baxter—Black Harry of St. Eustatius—Methodist Negro Missions.

One of the many marvels in the history of Methodism is the success with which it has penetrated to remote or obscure places—to sequestered villages, hidden mountain regions, frontier settlements, and coast islands. The importance which it attached to personal religious zeal, among its laity as well as its ministry, partially explains the fact; but its disciplinary system affords a fuller explanation. Its individual members or families, on removing to new homes, or in their temporary sojourns, were expected to be witnesses for their faith on all possible occasions. If they discovered but one or two of their brethren, or any serious persons, in any place, the prayer-meeting was usually attempted, and its results were gathered into the class-meeting. The prayer-meeting was often moveable from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, or it was multiplied till it could accommodate with its devotions the inhabitants of various quarters. Lay Methodists were expected to pray and "exhort" in these meetings; not those who did so, but those who did not, were exceptions to the general rule, anomalies excusable only on account of some obvious vocal or mental defect. If there were few or no

male members for such services, devout women could perform them; for while Methodism did not receive fully the Quaker opinion respecting female preaching, it allowed its women to take part in these modest meetings, both by prayer and exhortation; and to this fact must be largely attributed the interest and success of its social devotions wherever it has extended.

The removal of a Methodist, or a Methodist family, to a new town or village usually became, therefore, a means of Methodist propagandism; the prayer-meeting producing the class-meeting, the class-meeting becoming the nucleus of the society. Meanwhile the itinerant preacher, rapidly passing over his circuit of thirty or forty towns and villages, could be called in to recognize the new "class:" it became a regular appointment of the circuit, and thus, though on any congregational or local system of ministerial labour it might have been years without a pastor or quickly have become extinct, by the system of Methodism it at once came under pastoral oversight; for thirty or forty such incipient Churches, however poor, could readily support their two, three, or four travelling preachers. The infant society's statistics were reported at the Conference; it contributed to and shared in the Conference finances; it became, in fine, an integral part of the Methodist body. Wesley, meanwhile, sought out men who were suited to the special wants of such new places; Duncan Wright, from the army, Duncan M'Allum, from his humble craft, could preach in Erse among the Highlands of Scotland, and even the remote Shetland Isles were reached. Nathaniel Gilbert, met by Wesley accidentally, or rather providentially, while the planter was seeking health in England, became a Methodist; his two slaves were baptized, and all of them went back to the tropics to hold meetings in his private house, and to found Methodism in the West Indies, so that when the regular Methodist labourers arrived at Antigua they were welcomed by more than fifteen hundred members of classes. The Isle of Man, with its Manks language, found also among its natives an early supply of labourers for its incipient societies, and became the insular garden of English Methodism. The Isles of Jersey and Guernsey received Brackenbury, a layman who could speak their Norman French, and speedily gave Mahy, De Quetteville, De Jersey, and Toase to the itinerant ministry, not only for the Channel Islands, but for France. And thus, in Wesley's own day, while his cause was extending over the main lands, it made also its permanent lodgment in these outposts.

The isles or islets in the British seas comprise an area of nearly

4800 square miles; more than 500 isles have been enumerated; 175 of these, or of groups of them, are inhabited. The principal islands have a numerous population: the Isle of Man more than 52,000; the Isle of Wight more than 50,000; Jersey 57,000; Guernsey nearly 30.000; and Orkney and Shetland more than 62,000.* Methodism has reached all these, and also many of the smaller isles.

It was introduced into the Isle of Man in the month of March 1775. A native of the Island removed to Liverpool, where he heard Wesley's preachers; and, becoming a zealous Methodist, was of course immediately concerned for the religious welfare of his friends at home. He entreated John Crook, then a local preacher of Liverpool, but afterwards a well-known itinerant, to visit them. On Sunday morning, the 11th of March, Crook preached the first Methodist sermon ever heard on the island, in the court-house at Douglas, to a few hearers, who became so numerous at the evening sermon, that he had to address them in the open air. A generous Irishman who had strayed to the island, and whose brother at home was a Methodist, took the evangelist to his house, and a like-minded Scotchman sheltered him the next day. Crook now proceeded in his good work with energy and hope. One of his hearers on Sunday, procured for him a ball-room at Castletown, and spread notice of his coming. On the first evening the hall was filled; on the next, such was the crowd that he had to address them abroad, the hearers holding lighted candles in their hands. The scene was novel to the islanders if not picturesque, and could not fail to excite a general sensation. The good work had begun and could not now be defeated. A servant of the governor was touched by the truth, and took the preacher to his lodgings, and on the next Sabbath the lieutenant-governor and the clergyman of the town were among his hearers. At Peel he spent three weeks, preaching with great success to the fishermen, who received his word with avidity, and followed him, when he left, with tears and blessings.†

After a brief visit to Liverpool, required by his business, for this humble man preached at his own expense, Crook returned to the island and found societies already formed in seven different places, and 157 converts connected with them.‡ The usual hostilities of Churchmen and the rabble now broke out; but they had

* The English Census for 1851.

† Coke and Moore's Life of Wesley, book iii. chap. 2.

‡ Moore's Life of Wesley, book vii. chap. 4. Coke and Moore say that Crook formed the first society after his second visit at Castletown, Book iii. chap. 2.

been expected, and were prudently and courageously met by the evangelist. To conciliate the former he read the Homilies in every appointment, but in vain; a paper was put up at the quay admonishing the islanders against "the hypocritical field-preacher who had lately crept in among them to subvert the Church!" A ruffian, encouraged by this opposition, assailed him at Douglas, but on riding home the persecutor was thrown from his horse and instantly killed. At other places on the island Crook was welcomed by large assemblies. It was soon taken into the Whitehaven circuit; Crook joined the itinerant ranks, and the Isle of Man became a stronghold of Methodism. Castletown especially was visited, say the early Methodist historians, with "overwhelming showers of saving grace. Many were so convinced of sin as to cry aloud in the disquietude of their hearts; while others rejoiced in God their Saviour with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Nor was Satan idle. A fiddle was brought to the preaching house, and the rabble shouted mightily; but nothing could shake the steadiness, or divert the attention of the congregation." The school children assailed the preacher in the streets, following him with shouts and pelting him with missiles. Mobs assembled round the building where he preached, attacking it with stones, and wounding the hearers as they came out. Crook especially was the object of their cruelty; he was severely bruised, and was rescued with no small difficulty from their hands, but found sympathy from the clergyman of Peel, who saw the usefulness of his labours, for they were filling his church with hearers, and crowding its altar with communicants. The bishop of the island, nevertheless, encouraged the opposition, and issued a mandate commanding all "rectors, vicars, chaplains, and curates" to warn the people against the new comer, and to "repel from the Lord's table every such teacher." The rabble now raged, but the governor would not permit the episcopal warning to be read in his own chapel; his lady remonstrated openly against its intolerance, and the lieutenant-governor introduced Crook into the governor's chapel, where the chaplain disregarded the bishop's authority and gave the well-tried itinerant the communion. Crook was allowed to take his stand at the governor's gates, and preach to the multitude, that officer and his family being seated near by to hear him. A fast was observed by the persecuted society; the opposition ceased; the classes increased, and the field was won.

Labourers were soon raised up as exhorters and local preachers, who could address the people in their native language. Smyth, the Methodist clergyman whom we have seen persecuted in Ireland,

came to the Isle, and comforted and encouraged its increasing converts. Wesley himself visited it in 1777, and was received at the residence of the late governor by his widow; he was politely called upon by the clergy, though they could not invite him to their pulpits, as the episcopal prohibition was yet in the way. He preached, however, in the churchyards, in the streets, in the market-places, and passed over the whole island addressing immense and wondering assemblies. At a subsequent visit (June 1781) he found all obstacles swept away; the hostile bishop was dead; his successor was a tolerant man, and Methodism was extending its beneficent work of popular reformation over the entire island. Wesley met the local preachers; they numbered no less than twenty-two. "I never saw in England," he says, "so many stout, well-looking preachers together. If their spirit be answerable to their looks, I know not what can stand before them."

When he took his leave he wrote: "Having now visited the island round, east, south, north, and west, I was thoroughly convinced that we have no such circuit as this either in England, Scotland, or Ireland. It is shut up from the world; and, having little trade, is visited by scarce any strangers. Here are no Papists, no Dissenters of any kind, no Calvinists, no disputers. Here is no opposition, either from the governor (a mild, humane man), from the bishop (a good man), or from the bulk of the clergy. One or two of them did oppose for a time, but they seem now to understand better; so that we have now rather too little than too much reproach, the scandal of the cross having for the present ceased. The natives are a plain, artless, simple people; unpolished, that is, unpolluted; few of them are rich or genteel; the far greater part moderately poor; and most of the strangers that settle among them are men that have seen affliction. The local preachers are men of faith and love, knit together in one mind and one judgment. They speak either Manks or English, and follow a regular plan, which the Assistant gives them monthly. The isle is supposed to have thirty thousand inhabitants. Allowing half of them to be adults, and our societies to contain one or two and twenty hundred members, what a fair proportion is this! What has been seen like this in any part either of Great Britain or Ireland?" At his death there were two thousand five hundred Methodists on the island.*

* Stephens (Chronicles of Wesleyan Methodism, vol. ii. p. 249) shows that the island reported in 1827 no less than three circuits, with twenty-nine chapels, five travelling and seventy-four local preachers, and one Methodist for every fifteen of the inhabitants. At the present time the proportion of Methodists to population is about the same as in 1827.

In the Bay of St. Michael lie, near the coast of France, the "Channel Islands"—Guernsey, Jersey, and others—the only remnants of the Norman dominions annexed by William the Conqueror to England. The introduction of Methodism into these beautiful islands, and its extension thence into France, are among the most extraordinary episodes in its history.

Their language is French; their morals in the last century are described as degenerate, and their churches as generally destitute of vital piety.

Pierre Le Sueur, a native of Jersey, became the proprietor of an estate in Newfoundland, and went thither as a trader. There he heard the faithful exhortations of Lawrence Coughland, a Methodist preacher, who, at the instance of Wesley and Lady Huntingdon, was episcopally ordained, and sent to America by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge.* He returned to Jersey with an awakened conscience; but his neighbours, to whom he spoke of a change of heart, thought him mad. His own wife hardly thought better of him, and strenuously opposed his new views. He looked in vain for counsel or sympathy till a recent convert, John Fentin, returned from Newfoundland to Jersey, and gave him the guidance he needed. They became friends, and co-labourers for the truth. Le Sueur, after weeping and searching the Scriptures through whole nights, received the peace of God while prostrate in secret prayer. His wife, convinced by his example, began to pray; and after a period of great mental suffering, received, while upon her knees by his side, the consolation which he had obtained. Their conversations and exhortations among their neighbours and kindred soon produced no little excitement; and in about a week twelve persons were awakened and joined them in their devotions, while others violently discussed and opposed their supposed fanaticism. The most energetic opposers were, however, speedily among the converts. Thus, in 1775, began the religious revival which has ever since been more or less prevalent in the Norman Isles. Le Sueur and his Newfoundland friend were zealous in their exhortations and prayers among the people, and in a short time the former was preaching with much success.

In 1779 a pious sea-captain arrived on the island, and, on inquiring for religious associates, was sent to Le Sueur. They quickly

*Myles (Chron. Hist. p. 294) gives his name among Wesley's preachers from 1755 to 1765. It was in the latter year that he sailed for Nova Scotia, according to Myles, (p. 170;) in 1768 according to Coke and Moore, (Life of Wesley.)

understood each other, and prosecuted together the good work which had begun among the islanders, Le Sueur preaching in French, the captain in English.

In 1783 a regiment arrived in which were some devoted soldiers, who had been converted, some in Winchester and others in Southampton, under the labours of Captain Webb, one of the founders of American Methodism,* who had returned to England. They wrote home for a preacher; if one were sent who could speak both French and English, they said, "the Gospel would shine over the islands." Le Sueur joined them in this request. The letter was not addressed to Wesley, but to Jasper Winscombe, one of his preachers at Winchester, who immediately sent it to him. Robert Carr Brackenbury, a wealthy layman, who had begun to preach, and could speak the French language, was present when Wesley read the letter, and was forthwith despatched to Jersey. He rented a house in St. Helier, preached the Gospel throughout the island, was joined heartily by the devout soldiers and Le Sueur and his friends, and organized them into Methodist societies; "French and English unanimously declaring, in their respective tongues, at the love-feasts, the manifold works of God." In the midst of his labours Brackenbury was seized by a fever; "but," wrote the Methodist soldiers to England, "the squire's man has preached for us since his master's illness." This servant of Brackenbury afterwards became an important historical character in the annals of Methodism. He was Alexander Kilham, the founder of the "New Connection" Methodists, a man of piety and talents but of impetuous zeal.

In Jersey, as in almost every other place, Methodism had to win its way through much opposition. The assemblies were interrupted by the clamours of rioters, the windows of the preaching-places were broken, and the preachers attacked with stones in the streets; but an appeal to the magistrates put an end to these disturbances for a season.†

In 1786 Wesley sent Adam Clarke to Jersey. The young Methodist scholar pursued there his studies and labours with his usual ardour. He also shared the common trials of his ministerial

* Wesleyan Magazine, 1820, p. 294.

† The account of Methodism in Jersey by Moore, (book viii, chap. 3,) Coke and Moore, (book iii, chap. 2,) Myles, (chap. 7,) &c., should be corrected by the Memoir of Elizabeth Arrivé, by Rev. William Toase, in the Wesleyan Magazine for 1820, p. 290, et seq. See also Toase's Wesleyan Mission in France, pp. 3–8, (London, 1835,) and Histoire du Methodism dans les Iles de la Manche, par Rev. François Guiton. Londres, 1846.

brethren of those early days. His success again aroused the mob; at St. Aubin they surrounded the preaching-house, nearly tore it down, and perilled his life. At another time he was pulled from the pulpit by a magistrate, who headed the rioters. The drummer of the militia attacked him, and drummed him out of the town, followed by the jeering rabble. Clarke, however, had a stout Irish heart, and returned and conquered a peace. His labours prospered, regular preaching was established in the place, and the magistrates and mob learned not only to respect but to admire him; they became his warmest friends, and from that time Methodism triumphed in Jersey. "Societies were formed all over the island," and many native preachers and exhorters were raised up.

Meanwhile Pierre Arrivé, from the isle of Guernsey, was brought, by the instrumentality of Le Sueur, (now a local preacher,) to favourable views of the Methodists. Two of Arrivé's sisters were members of the society; he came to remonstrate with them, but returned to his family to open the way for their brethren in his native island. Brackenbury went thither, and thus, in 1785, was the mission of Methodism begun in Guernsey. Dr. Coke visited Jersey, and found among its Methodists a zealous young local preacher, Jean de Quetteville,* whom he took to Guernsey, where they formed the first society on the island. De Quetteville became a successful evangelist, and for nearly sixty years laboured indefatigably for the promotion of the Gospel in the isles and in France. His French hymns are still sung in all the Methodist congregations of the Channel Islands. He endured stormy persecutions in Guernsey, but prevailed over them all. He was arraigned before the Supreme Court, and was in danger of a sentence of banishment; but the witnesses against him were strangely led to contradict themselves, and to give decisive evidence in his favour, and he was acquitted.†

In the year 1787 Adam Clarke went to the island of Alderney. He knew not one of its inhabitants, nor where to find a home when he arrived; but he proceeded alone from the harbour to the town, about one mile, reminding himself of the divine direction: "Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house; and in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they

* Vie du Jean de Quetteville, &c., par Henri de Jersey, chap. 3. (Londres, 1847.)

† He died in 1843, aged 82, leaving Methodism in the Norman Isles with seventeen chapels and other places of worship, fifty-three local preachers, and two thousand five hundred and twenty-eight members of society.

give." Reaching the town he walked through it; and, observing a very poor cottage, felt an inclination to knock at its door. He did so, pronouncing the benediction, "Peace be to this house." He found in the humble dwelling an old man and woman, who, understanding his errand, bade him "welcome to the best food they had, to a little chamber where he might sleep, and (what was still more acceptable) to their house to preach in." He now saw clearly the hand of Providence in his favour, and was much encouraged. Being unwilling to lose any time, he told them he would preach that evening if they could collect a congregation. The strange news spread rapidly through the town; and, long before the appointed hour, a multitude of people flocked together, whom he addressed. When he had concluded, it was with much difficulty he could persuade them to depart, after promising to meet them the next evening. He then retired to his little apartment, where he had not rested twenty minutes, when the good woman of the house came and entreated him to preach again, as a crowd, including several of the gentry, were come to hear what he had to say. He went down immediately, and found the house once more full. Deep attention sat on every face while he addressed them. He continued his discourse about an hour, and concluded with informing them what his design was in visiting their island. The congregation then departed, and the concern evident on many of their countenances fully proved that God had added his testimony to that of his servant. The next evening he preached to a large, attentive company. A singular circumstance happened the following day. While he was at dinner a constable came from a person in authority to solicit his immediate appearance at a place called the Bray, (where several reputable families dwelt, and where the governor's stores were kept,) to preach to a company of ladies and gentlemen, who were waiting, and at whose desire one of the large store-rooms was prepared for the purpose. He immediately went, and in a quarter of an hour after his arrival a large company was assembled. The gentry were not so partial to themselves as to exclude the sailors, smugglers, and labourers, and the missionary was heard by all classes with serious attention.

The next Lord's day he preached in the evening at the same place to a much larger congregation, composed of the principal gentry of the island. The day following being the time appointed for his return, many were unwilling he should leave them, saying, "We have much need of such preaching and such a preacher; we wish you would abide in the island, and go back no more." Fortu-

nately, the vessel was aground, and he was detained till the next morning, to the great joy of his new friends. He preached to them again with greater effect than before, and after an affectionate parting, re-embarked for Guernsey. Adam Clarke thus introduced Methodism into Alderney. The native local preachers of Jersey and Guernsey soon followed his visit, a large society was formed, a chapel built, and the new cause permanently established.

Wesley, ever prompt to perceive and seize providential opportunities, was so interested in the prospects of these islands, that, in his eighty-fourth year, he visited them himself, accompanied by Dr. Coke. The voyage nearly proved fatal by shipwreck; and they were compelled, by adverse winds, to land at the island of Alderney, where the aged apostle preached on the sea-beach. From the 14th of August to the 1st of September, he continued preaching and exhorting from house to house, and hastening from island to island, with the ardour of a young missionary. In Guernsey he was received at the residence of De Jersey, a gentleman of fortune, whose whole family afterward joined the society, and has become historical in the Norman Methodist annals. Great congregations gathered to hear the two visitors; they preached daily, not only in the houses, but often in the open air; the highest classes of the inhabitants, including the governors, treated them with the utmost courtesy, entertaining them at their tables and thronging to their assemblies; and Wesley speaks of "very genteel congregations, such as he had rarely seen in England." Their visit gave new importance to Methodism throughout the islands.

As late as 1835 one of the Norman preachers writes that "no part of the exterior field of ministerial labour cultivated by the Wesleyan ministers has been more fruitful than these islands." From its small beginnings the revival had spread till nearly every parish in Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney, and Sark had its commodious chapel and numerous congregation.* In our day they report 3366 members of society, 2483 of whom are French.†

But a still more important result was to attend the establishment of Methodism in the Channel Islands. Wesley predicted that they would be outposts looking toward the Continent, from which evangelical religion would, sooner or later, invade France, to aid in re-awakening its hundreds of thousands of Protestants who had declined from the piety of their Huguenot fathers. Rationalism had spread moral enervation through nearly all their

* Toase's Wesleyan Mission in France, p. 8.
† Minutes of the Conference. London, 1863.

Churches, and popery hedged them in and repressed them on all sides. Their fate seemed nearly hopeless, but the Methodistic movement proceeded by faith rather than by sight, and in the year 1790 the Methodists of Guernsey began to direct their attention toward Normandy. Jean de Quetteville and John Angel went over and bore the message of the Gospel to many villages. William Mahy, a Guernsey local preacher, soon followed them. Coke, always hastening to and fro, visited Normandy, and at Courcelle ordained Mahy, a fact memorable as the first Methodist ordination on the continent of Europe. De Quetteville, with Coke, went to Paris, where they hired a place for public worship, but soon after abandoned it; De Quetteville had the honour, however, of preaching the first Methodist sermon in the French metropolis.* Meanwhile the people of Normandy flocked to hear Mahy, and many were awakened and converted in the villages of Courcelle, Cresson, Beuville, and Perieres. He extended his travels to Condé, and the Protestant Churches of St. Honorine, Athis, Montilly, Frene, Chefrene, and Mont Tabor welcomed him, and shared in the benefits of his ministerial labours. Many Roman Catholics, whose priests had fled in the terrors of the Revolution, heard him gladly, and the Protestant churches were readily opened to him. The consistory of Caen alone excluded him, but in that town he organized a society of about one hundred members. Severe persecutions, however, soon followed: Mahy was driven out of town after town, his health failed, his intellect was crushed by his sufferings, and the storms of the Revolution swept back all the labourers who had gone over from the Islands; but the good seed which had been sown was not destroyed; it remained in the moral soil, to spring up in more genial times.

Among the refugees in the Isle of Jersey, during the Revolution, was Pierre de Pontavice, a nobleman of an illustrious house in Brittany. He was a papist, but while hearing Richard Reece preach on the island, his conscience was smitten, and on a visit to England he was converted under a prayer of William Bramwell. He became a zealous Methodist, and by Coke's influence was, in due time, received on trial as a preacher by the Wesleyan Conference. He ministered with success to the societies in Guernsey and Jersey, but being anxious for the salvation of his countrymen, he went to France in 1802. He was received as an angel from heaven by the suffering societies which had been founded by Mahy at Beuville, Perieres, and other places. He translated Methodist

* Toase, p. 15.

books and tracts, and scattered them among the people. To facilitate his labours it was judged expedient for him to join the Protestant Church of France, and he became pastor of Bolbec, but continued his ministrations with zeal at Beuville and Perieres, and by his frequent visits kept alive among them the piety which had already been kindled by the preaching of Mahy and De Quetteville. During eight years did he continue his missionary struggles, when, smitten by mortal disease, he went from Bolbec to Beuville "to die," as he said, "among his beloved friends." His death was very triumphant, and "made an impression on the people which will never be forgotten." Such was his dying joy that he would allow his afflicted brethren to talk of nothing around his sick bed but of the heaven to which he was certain that he was going. When, anxious for the fate of their societies, they asked him, "What shall we do when you are taken from us?" his answer was, "You know the way of salvation; only be faithful, and all will be well." His fellow-Methodists buried him in a garden belonging to one of them, where they afterward affectionately commemorated him by a humble monument. He had saved the Methodist movement in France thus far in the absence of the proscribed British preachers. But what was now to become of it?

The historian of the French Wesleyan mission dwells on the remarkable providence which, now that the mission was entirely suspended by the deaths of Mahy and Pontavice, opened the way for new labourers.* He himself entered the itinerant ministry in 1804. On the river Medway floated ships crowded with French prisoners of war; he began to labour among them as a missionary, but the British officers opposed, and at last excluded him. Joseph Butterworth, brother-in-law of Adam Clarke, a Methodist member of Parliament, who is honourably commemorated in our day by a monument in City Road Chapel, corresponded with the government, as did also Dr. Coke, and procured the zealous evangelist permission to pursue his good work. French officers, as well as soldiers and sailors, heard his word, and received his friendship in their affliction with touching gratitude. He extended his labours from ship to ship, till he had ten under his pastoral care. He formed libraries on board, distributed tracts, visited the sick, comforted the dying, prayed and preached; and not a few were raised up to eternal life by his instrumentality. Local preachers from the Channel Islands were sent to help him. De Kerpezdron, one of these, went to France as a missionary when peace was pro-

* Toase's Wesleyan Mission in France, p. 24.

claimed. And now as the cartels began to carry back the prisoners, Bibles were sent with them; their Methodist volunteer chaplain preached to them his last sermon from the appropriate words, "La paix soit avec vous," "Peace be with you." "You found us naked," said some of them, as they took their leave with tears; "you found us naked, and you clothed us; in prison, and you visited us." Many hundreds had been taught to read the Bible. "We are glad," they said, "to possess this book; we will carry it home to our families." "This Bible shall remain in my family." Great numbers of the divine book were thus sent into France, and to all parts of the Continent.

De Quetteville, Le Sueur, and Ollivier hastened to France, and again the societies in Normandy had the bread of life from their hands. But the return of Napoleon from Elba compelled the evangelists to fly back to the Islands. The battle of Waterloo secured another peace, and the labourers again hastened to their old contested fields. Toase, accompanied by Richard Robarts and Benjamin Frankland, passed into Normandy, and in 1817 Charles Cook followed them. Cook studied the French language, and though not the first, he became the chief founder of French Methodism. It was now established, never again, it may be hoped, to be defeated. Henry de Jersey followed Cook in 1819. The latter traversed the country; societies were organized in the north, in Paris, in the south; circuits were formed, a native ministry raised up and recruited year after year, chiefly from the Channel Islands; an evangelical party began to appear in the Huguenot Church, and has ever since continued to grow in moral strength and in control of the Protestant ecclesiastical affairs of the country. A clergyman of the national Protestant Church has acknowledged that "among those who were privileged to take part in this revival" of the national Protestantism, "Dr. Charles Cook was not the least influential." * And D'Aubigné, the historian of the Great Reformation, has declared that "the work which John Wesley did in Great Britain, Charles Cook has done, though on a smaller scale, on the Continent." †

Cook preached his first French sermon at Beuville, December 3, 1818. On the 20th of April, 1820, the first French District meeting was held at Perieres, William Toase, Amice Ollivier, J. Hawtrey, Charles Cook, and Henry de Jersey being present. The

* Letter from Professor G. de Felice, Montauban, France, to the New York Observer, July 22, 1858.

† Letter on the Death of Cook, New York Observer, July 22, 1858.

first French Methodist Love-feast was held in an old chateau at Perieres, on Sunday, April 30, 1820, a scene of affecting interest.* The English Wesleyan Mission in Paris was commenced by Rev. Robert Newstead in 1833. French Methodism was organized into a separate Conference in 1852. Through many adversities—reverses, persecutions, and imprisonments—the evangelists have toiled on, and when Cook fell at his post, in 1858, lamented by D'Aubigné, Malan, Gaussen, the Monods, and his other eminent co-labourers in the revival of French Protestantism, there were two Methodist districts (north and south) in France, 12 circuits, (including Switzerland and Piedmont,) 141 chapels and other places of worship, 26 travelling labourers, 65 local preachers, and 1386 members, with day and Sunday schools, a monthly "journal," Tract and Missionary societies, and contributions amounting to 33,000 francs for religious charities.† Methodism, notwithstanding its comparative feebleness in France, has had an influence, not merely as an example, but by its direct agency, on the prospects of French Christianity.

Protestantism has remained, since the Reformation, an important element in the religious population of the country. It presents its chief strength in the south. Its churches appear quite densely on the map,‡ from the high Alps, through Vaucluse, Gard, Hérault, Marne, and Garonne, to the Basses Pyrenées. Following the river Garonne from Clairac in the southwest, northward, almost to its mouth, we pass through a region which is nearly destitute of Protestant churches; but at its mouth they again dot the map, and extend into Charente, Vienne, Dieux Sèvres, and even Vendée. Rochelle, so famous in French Protestant history, is midway on the western boundary of this region. Then appears a large section of the north-west of France almost entirely without them; but on the north they again thicken on the Seine, (Inférieure,) in Somme, the Pas de Calais, Nord, Aisne, and other places. Striking inland from this region of the north, we trace a long range of them to Paris, and from Paris quite into the heart of France beyond Orleans.

On the east of the country they again dot the surface of all the

* See an account of it in Memoirs of Margaret de Jersey Toase, p. 82. London, 1859.

† Letter from Professor G. de Felice. They have since been reported at 152 chapels or places of worship; 29 ministers; 72 local preachers, and about 1500 members.

‡ Map issued by the "Minister of Public Instruction and Worship," giving the consistorial boundaries of the National Reformed Church.

region which lies between the Moselle and the Rhine, and include the important city of Strasburg as their head-quarters.

Thus French Protestantism has established its main strength on limited sections of the north, south, east, and west, with a somewhat strong line of communication between the first of these points and the central region of the country. There are forty thousand Protestants in Paris alone, besides the floating Protestant population.

The two national Protestant Churches, the "Reformed" and the "Lutheran," (the latter in the east,) comprise about 2,000,000 of people, 762 ministers, 800 chapels, 2 theological seminaries, and 17 periodical publications. With other Protestant bodies they now maintain Missionary, Bible, Tract, and other religious "enterprises." When Cook arrived among them they had not one of these charities, or a single religious journal. There were but two or three of the regular clergy known as "evangelical" preachers. Three hundred at least are now known as such.

The divine light then still shines in France, however it may have flickered through several doubtful ages. Popery, with all its Gallic pomp and pretension, has not secure possession of the country. If the battle of the Reformation on its soil was suspended, it was not ended. The opposing forces are yet in the field, and are yet formidable on both sides. There are to be some momentous evangelical combats again in France, as the signs of the times show. The massacre of St. Bartholomew strewed the country with slaughtered Protestants, but their bones at least have been preserved, and the breath of God will raise them up, as in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, a mighty army. It is now breathing upon them. Methodism has extended its circuits to the High Alps, and to important points of Switzerland. It has reached the Piedmontese valleys, and been welcomed among the ancient Vaudois Protestants, but its destined work seems yet in its incipiency.

Methodism was permanently established on the Isle of Wight in 1779.* The first appointment of a Methodist preacher to this celebrated island was in 1787; the next year it was omitted from the appointments; in 1789 two preachers were sent to it; from 1790 to 1808 it did not appear in the Minutes, but was appended to the Portsmouth circuit.† Methodism had reached it, however, many years before the earliest of these dates. As early as 1753 Wesley visited it and found there "a little society in

* Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i. p. 437. 1862.

† Stephens's Chronicles of Methodism, vol. ii. p. 196, compared with p. 175. London, 1827.

tolerable order, and several of them had found peace with God.* He preached in the market-place at Newport to a numerous congregation. In October of the same year he returned, and preached with much success in the same place. Most of the inhabitants of the town, and many from the neighbouring villages, were in his congregation. "Surely," he wrote, "if there was any here to preach the word of God with power, a multitude would soon be obedient to the faith." He admired the scenery of the island—a gem of landscape beauty on the brow of the sea—and spoke of the inhabitants as a "humane, loving people." He was with them again briefly in 1758. His next visit was in the latter part of 1782, when he found them "ripe for the gospel." The preachers of the neighbouring circuit of Portsmouth had now evidently extended their labours to the island, and had met and overcome the usual hostilities, for he says, "opposition is at an end; only let our preachers be men of faith and love, and they will see the fruit of their labours;" and in 1783 he records that "there is much life among the people here, and they walk worthy of their profession." In 1785 he still found that "the work of God prospered there."

A single character has consecrated the Isle of Wight for ever in the history of Methodism and the regards of the Christian world.

A clergyman of the Church of England received one day from the hand of his servant a note, with word that the bearer waited at the gate of the parsonage. He went out to speak to the peasant, and found him a "venerable man, whose long hoary hair, and deeply wrinkled countenance, claimed more than ordinary respect." He was resting upon the gate, and tears were streaming down his cheeks; he made a low bow to the pastor and said, "I have brought you a letter from my daughter, but fear you will think us very bold in asking you to take so much trouble." The old man wept for the loss of his child. The letter was from his only remaining daughter, and invited the preacher to attend the funeral of her sister. It was remarkable for its simple but devout sentiments. "What is your occupation?" asked the pastor. "Sir, I have lived most of my days in a little cottage at Arreton, six miles from here. I have rented a few acres of ground, and kept some cows, which, in addition to my day labour, have been the means of supporting and bringing up my family." "What family have you?" "A wife, now getting very aged and helpless, two sons, and one daughter; for my other poor dear child has just departed out of

* Journal, July, 1753. Works, vol. ii.

this wicked world." "I hope for the better." "I hope so too: poor thing, she did not use to take to such good ways as her sister; but I do believe that her sister's manner of talking with her before she died was the means of saving her soul. What a mercy it is to have such a child as mine is! I never thought about my own soul seriously till she, poor girl, begged and prayed me to flee from the wrath to come." "How old are you?" "Near seventy, and my wife is older; we are getting old, and almost past our labour; but our daughter has left a good place, where she lived in service, on purpose to come home and take care of us and our little dairy. And a dear, dutiful, affectionate girl she is."

The aged man, his wife, his dead child, and one of his sons had been converted through the instrumentality of this Christian maiden, and his cottage had become a rustic sanctuary, fit in its simple and beautiful piety for the visitation of angels.

The clergyman attended the funeral, and as he sat in the group of mourners in the cottage, he was impressed by the affecting picture of simple life and domestic virtue and sorrow which it presented; and was "struck with the humble, pious, and pleasing countenance of the young woman" from whom he had received the letter. "It bore the marks of great seriousness without affectation, and of much serenity mingled with a glow of devotion." At the grave a profligate spectator was smitten by the scene, and by a sentence of the burial service, and became a regenerated man.

The pious curate repeated his visits, and learned among these peasants lessons of divinity which the books of the great Doctors of the Church could not teach him. He has recorded the touching story of these interviews and lessons. All the Protestant world has read and re-read, and will probably continue to read the record, till the end of time, with glowing hearts and flowing tears. Such was his estimation of the Christian peasant girl that he maintained a correspondence with her as well as visited her. Her letters are admirable for their good sense, and affecting by their piety, their natural tenderness, and their maidenly modesty. She was living "out at service," to provide for her aged parents. "Dear sir, I thank you," she wrote, "for your kindness and condescension in leaving those that are of high rank and birth in the world to converse with me, who am but a servant here below. But when I consider what a high calling, what honour and dignity God has conferred upon me, to be called his child, to be born of his Spirit, made an heir of glory, and joint heir with Christ; how humble and circumspect should I be in all my ways, as a dutiful and loving

child to an affectionate and loving Father! When I seriously consider these things it fills me with love and gratitude to God, and I do not wish for any higher station, nor envy the rich. I rather pity them if they are not good as well as great. My blessed Lord was pleased to appear in the form of a servant, and I long to be like him."

Time passes, and the saintly girl ripens for heaven, growing in grace herself, and dispensing blessings to all who come within her lowly sphere of life. The pastor receives another simple note at his gate. It calls him to attend his humble correspondent in her last sickness, which was a rapid consumption. "A sweet smile of friendly complacency enlightened her pale countenance" as she welcomed him, supported in an arm-chair by pillows. "You find me," she said, "daily wasting away, and I cannot have long to continue here; my flesh and my heart fail, but God is the strength of my weak heart, and I trust will be my portion for ever." A long conversation ensued. "I looked around me as she was speaking," says the visitor, "and thought, surely this is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven!"

One day he received a hasty summons informing him that she was dying. It was brought by a soldier, whose countenance bespoke seriousness, good sense, and piety. "She is going home, sir, very fast," said the veteran. "Have you known her long?" asked the pastor. "About a month, sir: I love to visit the sick; and hearing of her case, from a person who lives close by our camp, I went to see her. I bless God that ever I did go. Her conversation has been very profitable to me." "I rejoice," said the preacher, to see in you, as I trust, a brother soldier. Though we differ in our outward regimentals, I hope we serve under the same spiritual Captain. I will go with you." "She is a bright diamond, sir," said the soldier, "and will soon shine brighter than any diamond upon earth."

Over the face of the invalid, though pale, sunken, and hollow, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, had cast a triumphant calm. The soldier, after a short pause, silently reached out his Bible toward the pastor, pointing with his finger at 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57. The preacher read aloud, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." At the sound of these words the sufferer opened her eyes, and something like a ray of divine light beamed on her countenance as she said,

"Victory! victory! through our Lord Jesus Christ." She relapsed again, taking no further notice of any one present. "God be praised for the triumph of faith!" said the pastor. "Amen!" replied the soldier. A short struggle for breath took place in the dying young woman, which was soon over. "My dear friend, do you not feel that you are supported?" asked the pastor. "The Lord deals very gently with me," she replied. "Are not his promises now very precious to you?" "They are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus." "Are you in much bodily pain?" "So little that I almost forget it." "How good the Lord is!" "And how unworthy am I!" "You are going to see him as he is." "I think—I hope—I believe that I am." "What are your views of the dark valley of death, now that you are passing through it?" "It is not dark." "Why so?" "My Lord is there, and he is my light and my salvation." "Have you any fears of more bodily suffering?" "The Lord deals so gently with me, I can trust him." A convulsion came on. When it was past, she said again and again, "The Lord deals very gently with me. Lord, I am thine, save me—Blessed Jesus—precious Saviour—His blood cleanseth from all sin—Who shall separate?—His name is Wonderful—Thanks be to God—He giveth us the victory—I, even I, am saved—O grace, mercy, and wonder—Lord, receive my spirit! Dear sir—dear father, mother, friends, I am going—but all is well, well—"

"Farewell," said the preacher, as he returned home; "farewell, dear friend, till the morning of an eternal day shall renew our personal intercourse. Thou wast a brand plucked from the burning, that thou mightest become a star shining in the firmament of glory. I have seen thy light and thy good works, and will therefore glorify our Father which is in heaven."

He attended her funeral, and has described the scene, more beautiful than mournful. An aged Christian matron, "remarkably decent looking," managed the few and simple ceremonies of the occasion. She had been the Methodist "class-leader" of the dead maiden. "This," she said to the clergyman, "is rather a sight of joy than of sorrow." "Her soul is with her Saviour in Paradise," he replied. "I am but a poor soldier," said the military mourner, "and have nothing of this world's goods beyond my daily subsistence; but I would not exchange my hope of salvation in the next world for all that this world could bestow without it. What is wealth without grace? Blessed be God! as I march about from one quarters to another, I still find the Lord wherever I go; and, thanks be to His holy name! He is here to-day in the midst of this

company of the living and the dead. I feel that it is good to be here."

"Peace," said the preacher, as he retired to lead the procession, "peace, my honoured sister, be to thy memory and to *my* soul till we meet in a better world." Her humble brethren and sisters bore her to the grave with a hymn, the singing of which was led by a venerable Methodist of Newport.

Such are only a few references to the most affecting, the most generally read of Christian idyls—The Life and Death of Elizabeth Wallbridge, the "Dairyman's Daughter," loved and wept by millions, in the palaces of the wealthy, the cottages and hovels of the poor, the log-cabins of emigrants in the frontier wildernesses of America and Australia, and in the homes of converted heathen throughout most of the missionary world.* No history of Methodism that should omit her name would be complete; for, though her simple story touches no important chronological point of that history, none of its great public facts, yet, what better illustration do its annals afford of the essential spirit of Methodism, the spirit without which the letter would be dead? what better illustration of its beneficent and appointed task of bearing the purifying and consoling blessings of the Gospel to the homes of the lowly? Though the beautiful vision of the Dairyman's Daughter flits but briefly across our historic track, yet she passes over it as an angel, leaving an unfading light upon her path, reminding Methodists in all the world, and probably for all ages, of the great lesson of their cause, its providential design, the preaching of the Gospel to the poor. And her life, obscure in itself, has become historical in its results; thousands have owed their salvation to its record; tens of thousands have received comfort and strength from it in their hours of extremity. It has been translated into at least thirty languages, and her grave attracts to her native island more pilgrims than go to see its unrivalled scenery, or to gaze upon the residence of the Queen of her country, which adorns its beautiful coast.

In 1795 the Isle of Wight was attached to the Portsmouth circuit, which then included "two missions," one of them comprising parts of Sussex and Surrey, the other, portions of the island. Five preachers travelled this circuit. One of them, James Crabb, while preaching in Portsmouth, was instrumental in the conversion of

* The Dairyman's Daughter, an Authentic Narrative, by Rev. Legh Richmond: comprising much additional matter, edited by S. B. Wickens, and published at the Methodist Book Concern, New York: the best edition of this Christian classic yet published.

Elizabeth Wallbridge, who was then residing in that town as a domestic servant.* On returning to the island her sanctified life, Christian conversations, charities, and prayers, among the sick and poor, were productive of great good, and endeared her memory to all circles of its inhabitants. All her family became exemplary Christians, and one of her brothers was a useful local preacher among the islanders for more than forty years.† A Methodist chapel now marks the scene where "the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof" paused for a moment to receive her spirit, and hard by still stands the Dairyman's cottage, in its original rustic simplicity.

Methodism has continued to prosper on the Isle of Wight. In 1827 it reported twenty-three local preachers and eleven chapels.‡

In the year 1788 Joseph Sutcliffe introduced Methodism into the Scilly Isles. He was travelling the St. Ives circuit, in Cornwall, and, on crossing the point of Land's End, felt an irrepressible interest for "the souls of the poor smugglers," who were "notorious on those rocks of the sea." He prayed his two colleagues to spare him for one week: they replied, "If we let you go we must supply your appointments, and we have not a night at liberty." But one day a Cornish Methodist called to say, that his men had agreed to forego a night's fishing in order to take Sutcliffe to Scilly. This was an opening of Providence which so influenced preachers and people that they were afraid to obstruct the evangelist any longer. Accordingly he sailed. On arriving he stood up at the door of an inn, and cried aloud, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" and again in the evening proclaimed, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him

* See the facts of her Methodistic history in A Further Account of the Dairyman's Daughter, by Rev. Benjamin Carvosso, (Wesleyan Magazine, 1838.) This, together with additional letters of Elizabeth Wallbridge, her Will, a letter from Rev. Mr. Crabb respecting her, "A Short Account of the Dairyman" himself, and other interesting documents, is given in the Appendix to Mr. Wickens's edition of the "Dairyman's Daughter." As Richmond wrote his sketch from memory, he mistook Mr. Crabb, the itinerant, for a missionary, windbound at the island, on his way to New South Wales. The Dairyman's Daughter died May 30, 1801. Her mother died a few months later. The Dairyman survived some years, and died in the faith, aged eighty-four.

† Wesleyan Magazine, 1841, p. 355.

‡ Stephens's Chronicles, vol. ii. p. 106. At the present time (1863) there are two circuits in the island, six travelling preachers, two supernumeraries, and 866 members.

all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." He returned the same night, after promising to revisit the islands, which he did shortly after, remaining for a week, when a class was formed of three miners who had been Methodists in Cornwall. He could not procure his saddle-bags from the people without a promise that he would again return. His third visit, which was to be for three weeks, was extended to three months, as he was detained by a strong east wind, while the roads of Scilly exhibited the masts of ships of many nations, waiting for a fair wind to return to their own ports. Some gentlemen procured the court-house for his meetings, and he was allowed also to preach once in St. Martin's church. One of the regular clergymen of the island, having had a fit which impaired his speech, only preached once on the Lord's day; the other never officiated, and the prayers were read by a sailor. The visit of Sutcliffe was, therefore, seasonable, and could not fail to be successful. Land was given for a chapel, and he had the satisfaction of seeing thirty-seven persons joined in a society. On asking for his bill for board as he left, the reply was, "The workman is worthy of his meat." A lady at St. Agnes slipped a paper into his hand, after his last sermon, containing five guineas. "This," he says, "was a Godsend;" for the people had no hymn-books, and it enabled him to provide them. The converts kept together till a regular preacher was sent, and Methodism has ever since maintained itself among these islands.*

In the year 1779, William Black, the chief, though not the original founder of Methodism in the eastern British Provinces of North America, was converted in Nova Scotia.† He was born in Huddersfield in 1760. In 1774 he emigrated with his family to Nova Scotia. They found a few Methodist settlers at Amherst, who, without a pastor, maintained meetings for exhortation and prayer. It was at these meetings that the young emigrant received his first effectual impressions of the truth. After nearly five weeks of religious anguish, an old Methodist, who was praying with him, said: "I think you will get the blessing before morning." "About two hours after," says Black, "while we were singing a hymn, it pleased God to reveal his Son in my heart." He now

* Letter of Rev. Joseph Sutcliffe in Wesleyan Magazine, 1856, p. 503.

† Memoir of Rev. W. Black, by Rev. M. Richey, chap. 2. (Halifax, N.S., 1839.) Methodism in these Provinces has always been under the care of the Wesleyan body in England; I therefore refer to them here. In the Canadas it was, for many years, connected with the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States.

introduced domestic worship into his father's house, and soon most if not all its members were converted. In 1780 he began to exhort in public at Fort Lawrence, and with such success that two hundred persons were gathered into classes, one hundred and thirty of whom professed to have "passed from death unto life." He had, in fine, become a preacher, and before long was "itinerating," proclaiming the faith at Amherst, Fort Lawrence, Cornwallis, Horton, Falmouth, Windsor, and Halifax. Methodism was thus permanently founded in Nova Scotia.

In 1784 his societies were too numerous for him to supply them alone. He went to Boston to see Dr. Coke, and solicit assistance. His preaching in that city was attended with unusual interest; several churches were opened to him, and his memory is still revered there. He was the first Methodist preacher who appeared in New England after the visit of Charles Wesley.

In 1786 his name appears for the first time in Wesley's Minutes, though he had devoted himself exclusively to ministerial labours for five years, and his circuit embraced the whole province, and extended to Newfoundland, and at last took in New Brunswick.

Freeborn Garrettson and James O. Cromwell were sent from the United States to his assistance in 1785.* Garrettson was a man of cordial spirit and amiable simplicity of manners, but a hero at heart. He had been well tried in the States; a gentleman of wealth and character, he had nevertheless been mobbed, imprisoned, and his life perilled. In a letter which he addressed to Wesley, soon after his arrival in the province, he says: "My lot has mostly been cast in new places, to form circuits, which much exposed me to persecution. Once I was imprisoned; twice beaten; left on the highway speechless and senseless, and must have gone into a world of spirits, had not God in mercy sent a good Samaritan that bled, and took me to a friend's house; once shot at; guns and pistols presented at my breast; once delivered from an armed mob, in the dead time of night, on the highway, by a surprising flash of lightning; surrounded frequently by mobs; stoned frequently; I have had to escape for my life at night. O! shall I ever forget the Divine hand which has supported me?"

He travelled over these northern regions with indefatigable zeal. Societies were formed, chapels built, preachers raised up, and the new cause generally fortified. In his semi-centenary sermon he speaks of his itinerant toils and sufferings there. "I traversed," he says, "the mountains and valleys, frequently on foot, with my

* Life of Garrettson, by Rev. Dr. Bangs, chap. 11.

knapsack on my back, guided by Indian paths in the wilderness, when it was not expedient to take a horse; and I had often to wade through morasses half leg deep in mud and water; frequently satisfying my hunger with a piece of bread and pork from my knapsack, quenching my thirst from a brook, and resting my weary limbs on the leaves of the trees. Thanks be to God! He compensated me for all my toil, for many precious souls were awakened and converted."

With John Mann, Cromwell, and Black for co-labourers, Garrettson soon extended Methodism through most of the eastern provinces. He continued his labours there till the spring of 1787, and at the death of Wesley, in 1791, the new field reported nearly nine hundred Methodists, with eight circuits and nine preachers.

The introduction of Methodism into Newfoundland occurred, as we have seen, in the year 1765, under the ministration of Lawrence Coughland. He continued there about seven years, suffering severe persecutions. He was prosecuted in the highest court of the island, but was acquitted; abusive letters were written to England against him; a physician was engaged to poison him, but, becoming converted, exposed the diabolical design. Meanwhile the success of the missionary increased; he added many converts to his society; but the fury of his enemies became still more violent. They had him summoned before the governor, a discerning and resolute officer, who not only acquitted him, but made him a justice of the peace. His opposers were now reduced to quiet, and the persecuted preacher pursued his labours with increased effect.* His health at last failed, and he returned to England. John M'Geary was subsequently sent by Wesley to occupy the vacant post. He found that the good work begun by Coughland had dwindled after his departure, and was nearly extinct. Some of the converts had gone to their eternal reward, others had backslidden, and only about fifteen females remained in the society.† He laboured in Carbonear, but with such slight results that he was about to abandon the field in despair, when, in 1791, Black arrived from Nova Scotia. "I have been weeping before the Lord," exclaimed M'Geary to him; "I have been weeping before the Lord over my lonely situation and the darkness of the people, and your coming is like life from the dead." Black immediately began to preach in the town; an extraordinary revival ensued, and the mission was retrieved. His visit to the island is pronounced "the

* Coke and Moore's Wesley.

† Richey's Memoir of Black, chap. 2.

most useful and interesting portion of his missionary life.* Two hundred souls were converted during his stay at Conception Bay. He organized Methodism in the province, secured its church property, encouraged and fortified its classes, and obtained new labourers from Wesley. The people of Newfoundland had received him as a messenger from God, and dismissed him, at his return to Nova Scotia, with benedictions and tears. "I think," he says, "I never had so affecting a parting with any people before. It was hard work to tear away from them. I was nearly an hour shaking hands with them, some twice and thrice over, and even then we hardly knew how to part; but I at last rushed from among them and left them weeping as for an only son."

This apostle of Methodism in the eastern British provinces lived to see it generally and firmly established in those regions. He died in 1834, at the advanced age of seventy-four years, exclaiming, "God bless you! all is well!" and leaving in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland, 3 Methodist districts, 44 circuits, about 50 itinerant and many local preachers, with more than 6000 members.

Still more remarkable circumstances attended the early history of Methodism in the West Indies.

On the twenty-fourth of September, 1786, Dr. Coke embarked with three missionaries, Hammett, Warrener, and Clark, for Nova Scotia. The voyage was tempestuous, the ship sprung a dangerous leak, and was so strained by a continual succession of storms, that at last the water began to enter at almost every joint. The sails were wasted by the weather; the ropes, beaten with winds and waves, were washed of their tar and became nearly white; the candles were almost all consumed, and the supply of water was so much reduced that the passengers were limited to a fixed allowance. The vessel, in fine, was nearly "half a wreck," and it seemed impossible for it to reach Halifax during the winter. The captain, a violent and superstitious man, attributed these disasters to the Methodists on board, who had diligently preached and prayed among the passengers and crew. He walked the deck exclaiming, "There is a Jonah on board—a Jonah on board!" In a moment of violent passion he rushed into Coke's state-room, and cast overboard his books and manuscripts. He seized also the doctor himself, whose small person could offer no very formidable resistance, and, with vociferous imprecations, threatened that, if he was caught praying

* Rev. Richard Knight, in Wesleyan Magazine, 1837, p. 487.

again on board, he should be thrown into the sea after his books.* After beating about the ocean nearly two months and a half, a council was held, and the captain determined to steer as directly as possible for refuge in the West Indies, and in about three weeks more they arrived in the harbour of Antigua.† Coke, thus constrained out of his way, met, as he ascended the street of St. John's, Antigua, a man who was walking to a place of public worship, it being Christmas morning. This man was John Baxter, a ship carpenter. He had been a class leader and local preacher in England, and had now under his care a Methodist society of no less than one thousand five hundred and sixty-nine members, all blacks except ten.‡ The weather-worn preacher went with him to the chapel, and preached. He was pleasantly surprised at the appearance of his black audience; it was one of the "cleanest" that he had ever seen; the coloured Methodist women were uniformly apparelled in white linen gowns, handkerchiefs, and caps; the Gospel had evidently improved their external as well as their moral condition. The negroes had built the chapel by their own hard earnings. Religion had so far reformed their habits, that the old custom of maintaining military law during the Christmas holidays had been abandoned. On learning more about the islands, Coke concluded that the deviation from his route was providential, and made immediate arrangements for the settlement, in the West Indies, of all the missionaries who had accompanied him.

How came this remarkable collection of Methodists here on a distant and obscure isle of the tropics? To answer the question we must cast a glance back upon an interesting scene already noticed.

On the 17th of January, 1758, twenty-eight years before this voyage of Coke, Wesley preached at Wandsworth. He was heard by an eminent West India planter, who was seeking health there—Nathaniel Gilbert, a lawyer, and Speaker of the House of Assembly in Antigua. The hearts of the planter and of two of his female slaves were touched by the word of the preacher. He baptized the two slaves, one of whom, he says, was the first regenerated African he had ever seen; and, as he records the fact, he utters the prediction, since in such rapid process of fulfilment,

* Extracts of the Journals of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Five Visits to America. 12mo, 1793.

† History of the West India Islands, &c., by Thomas Coke, LL.D., vol. ii. chap. 33. London, 1810.

‡ Minutes of Wesleyan Conferences, vol. i., p. 189.

"Shall not his saving health be made known to all nations?" Nathaniel Gilbert returned with his two slaves to Antigua in 1760, and became the founder of West India Methodism—which has extended through all the British colonies of that archipelago, has become one of the chief means of their negro emancipation, has reached into Africa, and was, in fine, the beginning of all the plans of African evangelization subsequently prosecuted by the denomination.

Gilbert, on arriving at his home, began his religious labours by assembling a few persons at his own house, with whom he read the Scriptures and prayed. As usual with the Methodists of his day, it was not long before he stood up among them as an "exhorter," and at last found himself expounding and enforcing the word of God; in fine, he became a preacher. That a man of his position, with the dignity of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, should take the character of a lay preacher excited surprise, but that he should become a preacher to negroes excited contempt. He persevered, however, and founded a Methodist society of nearly two hundred members. He corresponded with Wesley, who sent him frequent counsels respecting the extraordinary work which was opening before him. At his death there seemed no one among his converts to take his place; but the society was saved from dissolution by the faithful labours of two female negroes, who held meetings for prayer among them every evening.*

In 1778, eighteen years after Gilbert began his religious labours, John Baxter was sent to Antigua, from the royal docks at Chatham, as a government shipwright. He found the remnants of Gilbert's society kept together by the two devoted coloured women. He immediately began to preach to them, and in a short time his zealous labours were extended over the island. He became a true missionary, working at his craft by day and preaching by night; and in 1783, by his persevering exertions, the first Methodist chapel in the torrid zone was erected. Eight years after his arrival, Coke and his three missionaries were cast by the winds of heaven upon the same shore, and forthwith began the celebrated "West India Missions" of Methodism. Coke persuaded Baxter to give up his business, which afforded him a liberal salary, and to devote himself exclusively to evangelical labours. He did so with

* It would be an interesting fact to know that these useful women were the same slaves who were baptized by Wesley, but I have not been able to verify that conjecture.

incredible success, and in our day the Antigua society reports two thousand one hundred and twenty-two Methodists.*

Immediately Coke and his missionaries sailed from island to island, preaching, and founding societies; and they were continually reminded of the special providence which was so strangely directing them, by the discovery of scattered Wesleyans from England and Ireland, who were at their command, to be formed into incipient Churches. At Dominica were two Methodist soldiers in the barracks, who, with two Moravian negroes, formed the first class; and to-day the society reports nearly eight hundred members. At Kingston, St. Vincent, they were received by a gentleman who, years before, had been converted under Gilbert's preaching at Antigua. Seven pious soldiers were also found in the town; they had been in the habit of meeting for prayer at five o'clock every morning, having erected a hut in the barracks for the purpose; six white inhabitants were combined with them by Coke in a class; the society now includes nearly sixteen hundred members. At St. Christopher's they were received with general interest, and preached to great assemblies; it now comprises about thirty-three hundred Methodists. At St. Nevis no encouragement was given to the evangelists, but that island afterward received the truth from the more favourable mission points, and its society now includes more than fourteen hundred members.

St. Eustatius, under the control of the Dutch, was most inhospitable to the visitors; but even there, by a singular providence, Methodism was already planted, and was destined to afford a remarkable and affecting example of its tenacious, if not invincible, vigour. As Coke and one of his preachers landed on its coast, they were addressed by two coloured men, who inquired, with a cordiality unusual among strangers, "if they belonged to the brethren." The missionaries, supposing they referred to the Moravians, said no, but remarked that they belonged to the same great spiritual family. The hospitable negroes, however, had made no mistake. Coke learned that they had come to welcome him, having received word from the island of St. Christopher's that he designed to visit them. They were two of a number of free negroes who had actually hired a house for his accommodation, which they called his "home," and had also provided for the expense of his journey. They conducted him to his new parsonage, where he was entertained with profuse hospitality.

Coke was surprised at this reception. No missionary had been

* Minutes of the Conference, 1863, p. 133. London.

there, and the island was destitute of the means of grace. These generous coloured people were evidently devout men; his visit was received as that of an angel, and yet there were mingled with their joy signs of a common and profound sorrow. With the utmost interest he inquired into their history. They informed him that some months before, a slave named Harry, had been brought to the island from the United States, where he had been a member of a Methodist class. On arriving among them, Harry found himself without a religious associate, and with no means of religious improvement but his private devotions. The poor African nevertheless maintained his fidelity to his Lord. After much anxiety and prayer, he began publicly to proclaim to his fellow-servants the name of Christ. Such an example was a novelty on the island, and attracted much attention. His congregations were large; even the governor deigned to hear him, and, by approving his course, indirectly protected him from the opposition to which his servile condition would otherwise have exposed him.

God owned the labours of His humble servant, and at times the Holy Spirit descended in overwhelming influence upon the multitude of hearers. Such was the effect of his preaching on many of the slaves, that they fell like dead men to the earth, and lay insensible for hours. At a meeting not long before Coke's arrival, sixteen persons were thus struck down under the black apostle's exhortations. Such an extraordinary circumstance excited a general sensation among the planters. They determined to suppress the meetings. They appealed to the governor, who immediately ordered the slave before him, and forbade his preaching by severe penalties. So far had the planters succeeded in alarming this officer, that it was only by the intervention of the supreme judge that Harry was saved from being cruelly flogged. His faithful labours were now peremptorily stopped.

It was a remarkable coincidence that Coke arrived the very day on which Harry was silenced; hence the mingled joy and sorrow of the "little flock" who so hospitably entertained him.

After giving him this information, they insisted upon his preaching to them immediately, lest by delay the opportunity should be lost; but fearing, from the silence which had that day been imposed on Harry, that it might result in more evil than good, he declined until he should see the governor. Such, however, was their hunger for the bread of life, that he could not induce them to separate till they had twice sung, and he had thrice joined with them in prayer.

He found, by his interview with the authorities, that it would

be inexpedient to tarry on the island. He therefore formed the little persecuted band into classes, under the most prudent man he could find among them, and, committing them to God, departed amid their tears and prayers for the United States. So amply had they supplied him with fruits and other provisions, that in a voyage of nearly three weeks, during which eight persons shared these bounties with him, they were not exhausted.

Harry, suspected and watched, did not presume to preach again; but supposing, after a considerable interval, that the excitement against him had ceased, and that the prohibition only applied to his preaching, he ventured to pray openly with his brethren. He was immediately summoned before the governor, and sentenced to be publicly whipped, to be imprisoned, and afterward to be banished from the island. The sentence was executed with relentless cruelty, but the poor negro felt himself honoured in suffering for his Master. While the blood streamed from his back, his Christian fortitude was unshaken. From the whipping-post he was taken to prison, whence he was secretly removed, but whither none of his little company could discover.

In 1788 Coke returned to the West Indies. After preaching at many other islands, he again visited St. Eustatius to comfort its suffering society. The spirit of persecution still raged there, and the fate of Harry was still an impenetrable mystery. None of his associates had been able to obtain the slightest information respecting him since his disappearance; nor did they expect to be able to learn his fate till the sea should give up its dead. A cruel edict had been passed by the local government, inflicting thirty-nine lashes on any coloured man who should be found praying. It seemed the determination of the authorities to extinguish religion on the island; yet the seed sown by Harry had sprung up, and nothing could uproot it. During all these trials the little society of St. Eustatius had been growing; its persecuted members had contrived, by some means, to preserve their union, and Coke found them two hundred and fifty-eight strong, and privately baptized many before his departure; they had been, indeed, "hid with Christ in God."

After visiting the United States and England, this tireless man of God was in 1790 again "sounding the alarm" among the West India islands; many new missions were opened; and again he visited St. Eustatius. A new government had been appointed, and he hoped for a better reception, but he was repelled as obstinately as before. Still the great Shepherd took care of the flock.

The rigour of the law against them had been somewhat relaxed, and, in the providence of God, eight exhorters had arisen among them, who were extensively useful to the slaves. To these exhorters and to the class-leaders Coke gave private advice and comfort, and committing them to God, who had hitherto so marvellously kept him, he again departed. The chief care of the society devolved on a person who, about four years previously, had been converted under the labours of black Harry. Harry's fate was still involved in mystery; but his "works followed him;" he had kindled a fire in St. Eustatius which many waters could not quench. On his return to England Coke interested the Wesleyan Churches in his behalf, and "many thousands were the prayers," he writes, "which ascended for him and the afflicted Church which he had planted."

In 1792 the indefatigable evangelist again visited the island, but he was not allowed to preach. Nothing was yet known of the fate of Harry. The spirit of persecution still prevailed, and even feeble women had been dragged to the whipping-post for having met for prayer. But, in the good providence of God, religion still prospered secretly, and the classes met by stealth. It seemed indeed that the inextinguishable spirit of the primitive Christians had found a lodgment among these oppressed Africans, as in the catacombs of Rome. Coke left them with a determination to go to Holland, and solicit the interposition of the parent government. This he did with his usual perseverance, but not with success. The tyranny of the local government continued about twelve years longer; but the great Head of the Church at last sent deliverance to His people. In 1804, about eighteen years after Harry was silenced, a missionary was admitted to the island; a chapel was afterwards built and Sunday schools established, and St. Eustatius has since continued to be named among the successful missions of the West Indies. Coke lived to see this long-closed door opened, and the devoted missionary enter with the bread of life for the famishing but faithful band of disciples. It reports in our day nearly three hundred members in its society.

But what became of Harry? During about ten years his fate was unknown, and his brethren had suffered the worst apprehensions respecting it. About the end of this period Coke again visited the United States. One evening, after preaching, he was followed to his room by a coloured man, deeply affected. It was black Harry of St. Eustatius! An enviable privilege it would doubtless have been to have witnessed that interview. He had been sent in a cargo of slaves to the States, but was now free.

Through all these years and changes he had "kept the faith," and was still using his humble talents with usefulness in the sphere which he occupied.

In his repeated visits to the West Indies, Coke extended his missions rapidly from island to island. At his second voyage (1788) he landed at Barbadoes; the ship's crew, among whom he had preached faithfully on the passage, bade him and his missionaries adieu with tears, and gave them three cheers as the small boat left for the shore. The visitors knew no one on shore, but here also there were soldiers who had attended Methodist preaching in Ireland; a sergeant recognized one of the missionaries as his old circuit pastor, and threw his arms around the evangelist's neck with delight. The good officer and a few of his Methodist comrades had been holding public religious service in a warehouse, exhorting and praying with the islanders. A merchant invited the visitors to dine with him, and Coke was surprised to find that he had been one of his hearers in the United States, where he had baptized four of the hospitable man's negroes. Pearce, one of the missionaries, was left on the island, and Methodism was effectually founded there. It now reports two circuits, seven missionaries, and three thousand and eighty-nine members.

Leaving missionaries on the islands of Saba and Santa Cruz, Coke went alone to Jamaica, where, notwithstanding some insults from drunken "gentlemen," he met with such a cordial reception that he could not doubt the final success of his mission. He was not disappointed; Jamaica now enrols twenty-seven missionaries and more than nineteen thousand Methodists.

On his return to England after this voyage, his reports created universal interest. He was authorized by the Conference to collect funds for the support of the missions, and devoted sixteen months to the purpose, preaching for them and begging money from house to house among the Methodists; and such was his zeal that few men who came in his way escaped his appeals.* He thus virtually began the Wesleyan Missionary Society, which for many years was embodied in his own person, and has, since his death, become the most successful missionary institution of the Protestant world.

* Drew (Life of Coke) gives an example of his success. A captain in the navy, from whom he obtained a subscription, calling upon a friend of Coke, the same day, asked, "Do you know any thing of a little fellow who calls himself Dr. Coke, and who is going about taking money for missionaries to be sent among the slaves?" "I know him very well," was the reply. "He seems," rejoined the captain, "to be a heavenly-minded little devil. He coaxed me out of two guineas this morning."

On his third visit to the West Indies (in 1790) he found that a chapel, accommodating seven hundred hearers, had been erected at Barbadoes; but the success of the mission was attended by the trials which had been common to Methodism in other parts of the world. The Methodists were called "Hallelujahs," and were hooted by that nickname in the streets. They had to appeal to the magistrates for protection from the violence of the mob. Baxter, who, with his devoted wife, had attempted to civilize the savage Caribs of St. Vincent, had been defeated, and was compelled to leave their mountain wilderness by the machinations of French priests, who had spread among them the report that the Methodists were conspirators, preparing the way for the conquest and slaughter of the tribe. Not long afterward the chapel at St. Vincent was broken into at night by rioters, and, besides other acts of sacrilege, the Bible was borne away and attached to the town gibbet. The success of the missionary at Kingston, Jamaica, where a chapel had been erected, provoked popular hostility; he had been repeatedly attacked by the mob, and his life endangered; the leading layman of his charge was stoned almost to death, and was under the necessity of disguising himself as a soldier; the chapel was in danger of destruction, and had to be guarded. Persecution also broke out in Antigua. Men of the higher class, but drunk, threatened to murder Baxter; they assailed him at the chapel-door, and the whole town was thrown into excitement by the alarm, and a cry of fire which arose from it.

On the island of Grenada, Coke found Methodism already successfully planted by a free mulatto, who had removed thither from Antigua, and had formed a class of twenty members, which has grown by our day into a society of more than six hundred. At Montserrat, St. Christopher's, and Nevis, he met also with increased encouragement.

By the time of Wesley's death Methodism had thus not only been introduced, but successfully tested by its usual trials, in most of the British West India islands. Not merely those mentioned, but the Bahamas, Hayti, and even the distant Bermudas, became the scenes of extraordinary labours, sometimes of severe persecutions from the local governments, and of martyr-like self-sacrifice by the English missionaries, who perished by shipwreck or by the pestilences of the climate—and finally scenes of emancipation and civilization, which form some of the most striking passages in the history of modern Christianity.

Such has been the success of Methodism in this interesting field, that in our day the West Indies report six districts, fifty-eight

circuits or stations, nearly a hundred missionaries, besides local preachers and exhorters, and more than forty-six thousand church members.

This extraordinary mission-work will again claim our attention in connexion with some of the most important events of the later history of Methodism. To the eyes of the dying Wesley it appeared like a sublime vision coming down from heaven on the distant sea, and, when he was closing his remarkable career, wondering with grateful astonishment at the outspread of his cause, twelve of his "helpers" were bearing the divine light among these islands, and reported five thousand six hundred and forty-five members in their societies.* While he was dying, the great Methodist work of African evangelization, so remarkably begun, was extending to the African continent, and in the next year after his death Sierra Leone reported two hundred and twenty-three converted negroes. It was the first of those Wesleyan societies which now dot the western, southern, and south-eastern coasts, and gleam like points of light far into the interior of that benighted continent, presenting the cheering spectacle of eighty mission stations, with nearly one hundred evangelists, besides numerous local preachers and exhorters, and more than seventeen thousand converts.†

But let us turn again to the great, the providential man who was the chief agent of this beneficent and marvellous work. He still lingers amid its surprising triumphs, but the time of his departure is at hand.

* Minutes of Wesleyan Conferences, vol. i. pp. 252-3.
† Minutes of Conference, 1863.

CHAPTER XII.

LAST DAYS, DEATH, AND CHARACTER OF WESLEY.

Wesley in his eighty-eighth Year—His last Signature to the Minutes—His last Travels—The last Entry in his Journal—His last Letter to America—His last Sermon—His Death—Number of his Sermons—His Burial—His Character—The Completeness of his Life—The Variety of his Labours—His Attention to Details—His Travels—His Writings—His Learning—His Temperament—The Problem of his Power as a Preacher—His military Coolness and Courage—Examples—His Humour—His Rebukes and Repartees—His Catholic Spirit—Liberal Terms of Admission to his Societies—He publishes the Life of a Unitarian as an Example for his People—His liberal Opinions of Montanus, Pelagius, and Arminius—Did he belong to the highest Class of Great Men?—Relative Greatness of Speculative and Practical Men—Wesley as a Legislator—Repose of his Character—An Example—His Credulity—His Ambition—His Piety—The Influence of Methodism on morbid Minds—Wesley's Sensibility—A romantic Incident—Grace Murray.

Wesley presided in his Conference, for the last time, at Bristol, in the summer of 1790. He was then in the eighty-eighth year of his age. His sight was so dim that he could not see to read the hymns in public worship; his limbs were too weak to ascend the pulpit or to walk the streets without support; his memory was too feeble to recall readily the divisions of his sermons, so that his travelling companion had sometimes to stand by his side in the desk, and state them to him at the right moment, and yet the tottering evangelist pursued his course of daily travel and daily preaching. Extraordinary tenacity of life and labour! If the world has ever afforded a parallel instance, it has at least done itself the injustice of failing to record it. On his last birth-day he wrote, as we have seen, that no glasses could aid his failing eyes; that his "strength was quite gone;" that "nature was exhausted;" but that he still "felt no pain from head to foot."* It is said, however, by those who saw him, that his eye was still bright and piercing, notwithstanding his failing vision, and his countenance peculiarly placid and benignant. He was gazed at in the streets with veneration, and his simple reply to the salutations of the crowds, who gathered

* Journal, June 28, 1790, Works, vol. iv.

about him as he passed, was in the words of the oldest of the apostles, whom he now so much resembled: "Little children love one another."* The entries in his Journal are now less frequent than ever; he makes no note of his last Conference, none indeed of any event after the fourth day of the month in which it was held till the twenty-seventh of the next month.† His hand trembled too much to write.

About the middle of 1790 he ceased to record his receipts and expenditures in his cash account-book. Its last sentence is striking, both by its sentiment and its appearance: "For upward of eighty-six years I have kept my accounts exactly: I will not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the continual conviction that I save all I can, and give all I can; that is all I have." It is scarcely legible, and the error in the number of years given, is proof of the failure of his faculties.

His last signature to the Minutes of the Conference shows that his hand had forgot "its cunning;" the final letter is nearly two inches above the first; the W is placed over the n, and the last syllable of his surname over the first. It has been engraved, and circulated among his people as a precious autograph; a scrawl which records volumes of meaning.

Precisely a month after the commencement of his last Conference in Bristol, he again arrives in that city, (August 27, 1790,) so notable in his own history; he holds an evening meeting and continues it till midnight, as a "Watchnight;" two days later he performs alone a service of three hours' duration, reading prayers, preaching, and administering the Lord's Supper; and the same day he preaches in the open air, "the hearts of the people bowing down before the Lord" under his word. The next day he is again on his route, preaching twice in different towns; in the evening to a crowd within the chapel, and a multitude without, who hear through the open windows. The following day he again preaches twice elsewhere, and thus he proceeds from day to day, with apparently but few intermissions; visiting again his favourite field of Cornwall; London, and its neighbouring regions; and the Isle of Wight, whose "poor, plain, artless society" delights him, and gives him assurance that "here at least we have not lost our labour;" though he expected not that from these poor and artless people was

* Rev. W. W. Stamp, in Wesleyan Magazine, 1834, p 106.

† It is not certain, however, how much of the manuscript was given by the transcribers.

soon to arise, above the horizon of the Christian world, that humble but benign light which has since become a conspicuous star to the eyes of Protestant Christendom, and has shed its modest ray upon the paths of millions of the "poor and artless," teaching them, by one of the best and most beautiful of human examples, how to live and how to die.*

He returns often to Bristol, where he yet attempts to preach at five o'clock in the morning, notwithstanding the increasing fever of his mouth at that early hour. Companies of his brethren come out to conduct him into London as he approaches the city; they pause with him an hour in the "lovely walks" of the garden at Cobham; he still delights in such scenes, but is too near the spiritual world to feel his former interest in them. "The eye," he says, "was not satisfied with seeing; an immortal spirit can be satisfied with nothing but seeing God." He stays but a few days in the metropolis, and next appears "under a large tree" in "ancient Winchelsea, calling to most of the inhabitants of the town: 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand; repent and believe the Gospel.'" *It was his last outdoor sermon.* He hastens on to Rye, "where the word did not fall to the ground;" again to London; then to Colchester, where "a wonderful Congregation of rich and poor, clergy and laity," crowd around him; to Norwich, the former scene of persecution and strife to his people, but where now "wonderfully had the tide turned, and he had become an honourable man;" to Yarmouth, where the multitude of hearers thronged without as well as within the house; to Norwich again, where he preaches two sermons and administers the communion on the same day; to Lynn, where he arrived wet and chilled "from head to foot" with the rain, but preaches nevertheless, "soon forgetting this little inconvenience" in the earnest interest of his congregation, and where, the next day, all the clergymen of the town, except one who was lame, were present to hear him. He returns again to London; he has now freer admission there than ever to the national churches; and his Journals, containing the most extraordinary record of a human life in the possession of mankind, end on Sunday, the 24th of October, 1790, with a notice of his preaching one entire Sabbath in pulpits of the Establishment, of which he was at once the greatest honour and the greatest victim of the last century. In the morning he exhorted the Spitalfields Church to "put on the

* See page 635.

whole armour of God;" in the afternoon, at St. Paul's, Shadwell, he warned a great throng that "one thing is needful."

But though the record of his labours ends, the labours themselves still go on for some months. He continues to preach in his chapels in London, usually meeting the society after the sermon in each "appointment," and—giving them his farewell counsel, "to love as brethren, to fear God, and to honour the king"—he sings with them at parting his accustomed hymn, praying in its triumphant strain that he might "cease at once to work and live."* He even prepares to undertake, at the usual time of the year, another journey to Ireland and Scotland; his chaise and horses are sent before him to Bristol, and seats engaged for himself and his travelling companion in the Bath coach; but the energy of his mind can no longer sustain his sinking body, and the design is abandoned.†

On the first of February he writes his last letter to America.‡ "See that you never give place to one thought of separating from your brethren in Europe," he says; "lose no opportunity of declaring to all men that *the Methodists are one people in all the world, and that it is their full determination so to continue.*"

On the 17th he preached at Lambeth, and returned feverish with a cold. He seems to have read aright the premonition, for the next day he preached at Chelsea from the words, "The King's business requires haste." He was obliged to pause at intervals in the discourse, and explain to his hearers that such an unusual claim on their indulgence was rendered necessary by his indisposition.

On the 19th he pursued his usual indoor business, though evidently becoming worse; at dinner he requested a friend to read to him four chapters of the book of Job, from the fourth to the seventh.

On the 20th, the Sabbath, he rose at his accustomed hour of four o'clock, but could not attempt his accustomed labours. He slept much during the day, and two of his own discourses on the Sermon on the Mount were read to him. On Monday his strength rallied, and he made an excursion to Twickenham; on Tuesday evening he preached in City Road Chapel his last sermon there.

On Wednesday the 23rd, at Leatherhead, he discoursed on the text, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him

* It is one of Charles Wesley's finest hymns—"Shrinking from the cold hand of death," &c.—45 Wesleyan Hymn Book.

† Memoir prefixed to the collected edition of his Works, by Rev. Joseph Benson. London, 1816.

‡ To Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, Works, vol. xiii.

while he is near." *It was his last sermon.* On that day fell from his dying grasp a trumpet of the truth, which had sounded the everlasting Gospel oftener, and more effectually, than that of any other man for sixteen hundred years. The Reformers of Germany, Switzerland, France, and England wrought their great work more by the pen than by the voice. It has been admitted that Whitefield preached more eloquently, with few exceptions to larger assemblies, and travelled more extensively (though not more miles) than Wesley, within the same limits of time; but Wesley survived him more than twenty years, and his power has been more productive and permanent. Whitefield preached eighteen thousand sermons, more than ten a-week for his thirty-four years of ministerial life. Wesley preached forty-two thousand four hundred, after his return from Georgia, more than fifteen a-week. His public life, ending on the 23rd of February, 1791, stands out in the history of the world unquestionably pre-eminent in religious labours above that of any other man since the apostolic age.

On Saturday the 26th he wrote his final letter. It was addressed to Wilberforce, and was an exhortation to perseverance in his parliamentary labours against the African slave-trade.* By his "Thoughts upon Slavery," he had pledged himself to that great reform at its beginning under Clarkson and Sharpe, before Wilberforce's election to Parliament by the county of York.

The closing scenes of his life were worthy of its pure and beneficent history.

On the Sunday morning after his last sermon he rose with apparently improved health, and sitting in his chair, with his habitual cheerfulness quoted from his brother's hymn, entitled "Forsake me not when my strength faileth," the stanza,

> "Till glad I lay this body down,
> Thy servant, Lord, attend;
> And O, my life of mercy crown
> With a triumphant end!"

Death was a welcome rest to him, and immediately after he had concluded the hymn he uttered, with peculiar emphasis, the words of Christ: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." He attempted to converse, but was quickly exhausted, and was obliged to lie upon his bed. The group of friends around him knelt in prayer; he responded the amen with unusual fervour. Soon after he exclaimed:

* Letter 835, Works, vol. xiii.

"There is no need for more than what I said at Bristol; my words then were:

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.'"*

"Is this the present language of your heart?" asked one of his friends, "and do you now feel as you did then?" "Yes," he replied. "'Tis enough," rejoined his friend; "He, our precious Immanuel, has purchased, has promised all." "He is all! He is all! I will go?" responded the dying man.

The evening came on. "How necessary is it," he exclaimed, "for every one to be on the right foundation?

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.'

We must be justified by faith, and then go on to full sanctification."

The next day he was lethargic. "There is no way into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus," he said in a low but distinct voice. Shaking off the languor of disease, he repeated three or four times during the day: "We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." On Tuesday, the first of March, he sank rapidly, but he was to depart, as so many thousands of his lowliest followers had, with "singing and shouting." He began the day by singing one of his brother's lyrics:

"All glory to God in the sky,
And peace upon earth be restored;
O Jesus, exalted on high,
Appear, our omnipotent Lord;

* "At the Bristol conference, in the year 1783, Mr. Wesley was taken very ill; neither he nor his friends thought he would recover. He said to Mr. Bradford: 'I have been reflecting on my past life; I have been wandering up and down between fifty and sixty years, endeavouring, in my poor way, to do a little good to my fellow-creatures; and now it is probable that there are but a few steps between me and death; and what have I to trust to for salvation? I can see nothing which I have done or suffered that will bear looking at. I have no other plea than this:

"I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.'"

"The sentiment here expressed, and his reference to it in his last sickness, plainly show how steadily he had persevered in the same views of the Gospel with which he set out to preach it."— Moore's Life of Wesley, book viii. chap. 4.

"Who, meanly in Bethlehem born,
Didst stoop to redeem a lost race;
Once more to thy people return,
And reign in thy kingdom of grace.

"O wouldst thou again be made known,
Again in thy Spirit descend;
And set up in each of thine own,
A kingdom that never shall end!
Thou only art able to bless,
And make the glad nations obey,
And bid the dire enmity cease,
And bow the whole world to thy sway."

His voice failed at the end of the second stanza. He asked for pen and ink, but could not write. A friend, taking the pen to write for him, asked, "What shall I write?" "Nothing," replied the dying patriarch, "but *that God is with us.*" During the forenoon he again surprised his mourning friends by singing the rapturous hymn:

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures."

Still later he seemed to summon his remaining strength to speak, but could only say in broken accents, "Nature is—nature is"—One of his attendants added, "nearly exhausted; but you are entering into a new nature, and into the society of blessed spirits." "Certainly," he responded, clasping his hands and exclaiming "Jesus!" But his voice failed, and, though his lips continued to move, his meaning could not be understood.

He was placed in his chair, but seemed suddenly struck with death. With a failing voice he prayed aloud: "Lord, thou givest strength to those that speak and to those that cannot. Speak, Lord, to all our hearts, and let them know that thou loosest the tongue." Raising his voice, he sung two lines of the Doxology:

"To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Who sweetly all agree—"

But he could proceed no further. "Now we have done, let us all go," he added. The ruling passion was strong in death; he evidently supposed himself dismissing one of his assemblies.

He was again laid upon his bed, to rise no more. After a short sleep he called all present to offer prayer and praise. They knelt around him, and, says one of them, "the room seemed filled with the Divine presence."* A second time they knelt in like manner, and his fervent responses showed that he was yet able to share in their devotions. He uttered an emphatic amen to a part of the prayer which alluded to the perpetuation and universal spread of the doctrine and discipline to which he had devoted his life. When they rose from their knees he took leave of each, grasping their hands and saying, "Farewell! Farewell!"

Soon after another visitor entered the chamber; Wesley attempted to speak, but observing that he could not be understood, he paused, and collecting all his strength, exclaimed, "The best of all is, God is with us." And then, says a witness of the scene, "lifting up his dying arms in token of victory, and raising his feeble voice with a holy triumph, not to be expressed," he again cried out, "The best of all is, God is with us."† "Who are these?" he asked, noticing a group of persons at his bedside. "Sir," replied Rogers, who, with his wife, Hester Ann Rogers, ministered to him in his last hours, "Sir, we are come to rejoice with you; you are going to receive your crown." "It is the Lord's doing," he replied, "and marvellous in our eyes." On being informed that the widow of Charles Wesley was come, he said, in allusion to his deceased brother, "He giveth his servants rest." He thanked her, as she pressed his hand, and affectionately endeavoured to kiss her. As they wet his lips, he said, "We thank thee, O Lord, for these and all thy mercies: bless the Church and king; and grant us truth and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for ever and ever!" It was his usual thanksgiving after meals.

"He causeth his servants to lie down in peace;" "The clouds drop fatness;" "The Lord is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge!"—such were some of his broken but rapturous ejaculations in these last hours. Again he summoned the company to prayer at his bedside: the chamber had become not merely a sanctuary, it seemed the gate of heaven; he joined in the service with increased fervour; during the night he attempted frequently to repeat the hymn of Watts which he had sung the preceding day, but could only utter,

"I'll praise—I'll praise—"

* Henry Moore, Life of Wesley, book viii. chap. 4.

† This phrase has been adopted as a motto on the seal of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society.

The next morning the sublime scene closed. Joseph Bradford, long his ministerial travelling companion, the sharer of his trials and success, prayed with him. "Farewell!" was the last word and benediction of the dying apostle.

While many of his old friends, preachers and others, were prostrate in prayer around him, without a struggle or a sigh his spirit took its flight, and the unparalleled career of John Wesley was ended.

He had requested in his will that six poor men should bear his corpse to the grave, and should be rewarded with twenty shillings each. He directed that there should be no hearse, no coach, no escutcheon, no pomp, except the tears of those who loved him, and were following him to heaven. "I solemnly adjure my executors," he wrote, "punctually to observe this." While dying he said, "Let me be buried in nothing but what is woollen; and let my corpse be carried, in my coffin, into the chapel."

The day before his burial he lay in state in the City Road Chapel, dressed in his gown, cassock, and band. His countenance is described as singularly placid, wearing "a heavenly smile, a beauty which was admired by all who saw it." * Great throngs flocked to see for the last time his venerable features, and it was deemed necessary to inter him before six o'clock in the morning, in order to prevent accidents from the crowd. Many spectators, however, were present; and when the preacher who read the burial-service reached the passage which says, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto Himself the soul of our *brother*," and substituted the word "father," the throng was so deeply affected that from silent tears they broke out into loud weeping.

The life of such a man is best characterized by his deeds, and they have been amply narrated in these pages; yet, at the conclusion of a career so extraordinary, both writer and reader are irresistibly detained by questions which will not be appeased without some further answer. What is the explanation of this anomalous

* Hester Ann Rogers, who was present throughout the last scene, writes: "The solemnity of the dying hour of that great and good man, I believe, will be ever written on my heart. A cloud of the divine presence rested on all and while he could hardly be said to be an inhabitant of earth, being now speechless, and his eyes fixed, victory and glory were written on his countenance, and quivering, as it were, on his dying lips. . . . . No language can paint what appeared in that face! The more we gazed upon it, the more we saw of heaven unspeakable!"—Memoir of Mrs. Rogers.

life? What were the attributes of this marvellous man's character? And whence was his power?

Contemplated in almost any one of its phases, the life of Wesley appears unusual, if not great; but, considered as a whole, its symmetrical completeness is almost a peculiarity in the history of great men; for how seldom do we find, in the biographies of such men, that any great life-plan has been conclusively achieved; achieved in such a manner as to complete their own anticipations, and not to leave to the precarious agency of their successors the task of fulfilling their designs or repairing their failures? Wesley not only saw the initiation of the Methodistic movement, but also conducted it through the successive and critical gradations of its development, and lived to see it at last an organic, a settled and permanent system, in the Old Word and in the New, with a thoroughly organized ministry, a well-defined and well-defended theology, the richest psalmody then known to English Protestantism, a considerable literature, not of the highest order, but therefore the better adapted to his numerous people, and a scheme of ecclesiastical discipline which time has proved to be the most effective known beyond the limits of the Papal Church. By his episcopal organization of his American Societies, and the legal settlement of his English Conference, he saw his great plan in a sense completed; it could be committed to the contingencies of the future to work out its appointed functions; and, after those two great events, he was permitted to live long enough to control any incidental disturbances that might attend their first operations, and to pass through a healthful, serene conclusion of his long life—a life which the philosopher must pronounce singularly successful and fortunate, the Christian singularly providential. He not only outlived all the various uncertainties of his great work, he outlived the prolonged and fierce hostilities which had assailed it, and the suspicions and slanders which had been rife against himself personally,* and died at last universally

* Some qualification is necessary to this remark. Soon after Wesley's death, "An Impartial Review of his Life and Writings" was published in London, containing forged "love-letters," &c., said to have been written by Wesley in his eighty-first year. The pamphlet was addressed to Dr. Coke. In 1801 a Mr. J. Collet, smitten with remorse, wrote to Coke acknowledging that the letters and most of the alleged facts of the publication were fictions written by himself.—(Drew's Coke, chap. 14.) The famous bookseller, James Lackington (Memoirs, chap. 31), published also some infamous charges against Wesley, from a pamphlet entitled "A Letter to Rev. T. Coke, LL.D., by an old Member of the Society." Lackington, who had been a Methodist, and had made a fortune in his business by the aid of a fund which Wesley had

venerated, without pain, without disease, in his bed at his own home, at the head-quarters of his successful cause, and with the prayers and benedictions of the second and third generations of his people.

And this life, so fortunate in its rare completeness, was still more remarkable for its manifold character. Wesley seemed to be conducting at once the usual lives of three or four men, if, indeed, the word usual can be applied to any one department of his life. In either his literary labours or his travels, his functions as an ecclesiastical legislator and administrator, or his labours as an evangelist or preacher, he has seldom been surpassed; and a historian of Methodism hardly makes a questionable assertion when he says, that a man of more extraordinary character than John Wesley probably never lived upon this earth; that his travels, his studies, or his ministerial labours, were each more than sufficient for any ordinary man; that few men could have endured to travel so much as he did, without either preaching, writing, or reading; that few could have endured to preach as often as he did, supposing they had neither travelled nor written books; and that very few men could have written and published so many books as he did, though they had always avoided both preaching and travelling.*

He possessed in an eminent degree one trait of a master mind—the power of comprehending and managing at once the outlines and the details of plans. It is this power which forms the philosophical genius in science; it is essential to the successful commander and the great statesman. It is illustrated in the whole economical system of Methodism—a system which, while it fixes itself to the smallest locality with the utmost tenacity, is sufficiently general in its provisions to reach the ends of the world, and still maintain its unity of spirit and discipline.

No man knew better than Wesley the importance of small things. His whole financial system was based on weekly penny collections; and it was a rule of himself and his preachers never to omit a single preaching appointment, except from invincible necessity. He was

established at City Road for the assistance of poor business men, became an infidel. He lived, however, to repent, and to show that the pamphlet from which he had quoted was fictitious. See his "Confessions." Both these famous works must be classed, with Dunton's Life and Errors, among the curiosities of Methodist bibliography. Both authors are favourites with bibliomaniacs. The best edition of Lackington's Memoirs is that of Whitaker, Treacher, & Arnot. London, 1830. It contains a large part of the Confessions.

* Crowther's Portraiture of Methodism, chap. i. p. 72.

the first to apply extensively the plan of tract distribution. He wrote, printed, and scattered over the kingdom pamphlets and placards on almost every topic of morals and religion. In addition to the usual services of the Church, he introduced the band-meeting, the class-meeting, the prayer-meeting, the love-feast, the watch-night, the quarterly meeting, and the annual conference. Not content with his itinerant labourers, he called into use the less available powers of his people, by establishing the departments of local preachers, exhorters, and leaders. It was, in fine, by gathering together fragments, by combining minutiæ, that he formed that powerful system of spiritual means which is transcending all others in the evangelization of the world. Equally minute was he in his personal habits. Moore, his biographer and companion at City Road, says, that the utmost neatness and simplicity were manifest in every circumstance of his life: that in his chamber and study, during his winter months of residence in London, not a book was misplaced, or even a scrap of paper left unheeded; that he could enjoy every convenience of life, and yet acted in the smallest things like a man who was not to continue an hour in one place; that he appeared at home in every place, settled, satisfied, and happy, and yet was ready any hour to take a journey of a thousand miles.

It was not only in the theoretical construction of plans that Wesley excelled, if indeed he paused at all to theorize about plans; but he was pre-eminently distinguished by the practical energy with which he prosecuted the great variety of his labours. Their history would be absolutely incredible with less authentic evidence than that which attests it. He was perpetually travelling and preaching, studying and writing, translating and abridging, superintending his societies, and applying his great conceptions. He travelled usually four thousand five hundred miles a-year, and, as we have seen, this "itinerancy," at the rate of more than the circumference of the globe every six years, was pursued on horseback down to nearly his seventieth year—preaching two, three, and sometimes four sermons a-day, commencing at five o'clock in the morning; and in all this incessant travelling and preaching he carried with him the studious and meditative habits of the philosopher. Scarcely a department of human inquiry escaped his attention.

Like Luther, he knew the importance of the press; he kept it teeming with his publications, and his itinerant preachers were good agents for their circulation. His works, including abridgements and translations, amounted to about two hundred volumes.

These comprise treatises on almost every subject of divinity, on poetry, music, history, and natural, moral, metaphysical, and political philosophy. He wrote, as he preached, *ad populum;* and we shall hereafter see that he was not only the original leader, but the author of those plans which have become a characteristic of our times for the popular diffusion of knowledge.

Unlike most men who are given to various exertions and many plans, he was accurate and profound. He was an adept in classical literature and the use of the classical tongues; his writings are adorned with their finest passages. He was familiar with a number of modern languages; his own style is one of the best examples of strength and perspicuity among English writers. He seems to have been ready on almost every subject of learning and general literature; and as a logician he was remarkably acute and decisive.

He was but little addicted to those vicissitudes of temper which characterize imaginative minds. His temperament was warm, but not fiery. His intellect never appears inflamed, but always glowing—a serene radiance. His immense labours were accomplished, not by the impulses of restless enthusiasm, but by the cool calculation of his plans, and the steady self-possession with which he pursued them. He habitually exemplified his favourite maxim: "Always in haste, but never in a hurry." "I have not time to be in a hurry," he said. He was as economical of his time as a miser could be of his gold; rising at four o'clock in the morning, and allotting to every hour its appropriate work. "Leisure and I have taken leave of each other," he wrote. Fletcher said of him: "Though oppressed with the weight of near seventy years, and the care of near thirty thousand souls, he shames still, by his unabated zeal and immense labours, all the young ministers of England, perhaps of Christendom. He has generally blown the Gospel trump, and rode twenty miles, before most of the professors who despise his labours have left their downy pillows. As he begins the day, the week, the year, so he concludes them, still intent upon extensive services for the glory of the Redeemer and the good of souls." Such, however, was the happy distribution of his time, that, amid a multiplicity of engagements which would distract an ordinary man, he declares there were few persons who spent so many hours in quiet solitude as himself. And it has justly been remarked, that one wonder of his character was the self-control by which he preserved himself calm, while he kept all in excitement around him.

Like most great men who have reached old age, Wesley was careful in his physical habits. Though of feeble constitution, his regularity, sustained through such great exertions and vicissitudes, produced a vigour and equanimity which are seldom the accompaniments of a laborious mind or of a distracted life. And often did he declare, as we have seen, that he had not felt lowness of spirits one quarter of an hour since he was born—that ten thousand cares were no more weight to his mind than ten thousand hairs to his head, and that he never lost a night's sleep in his life before his seventieth year.

One of the finest spectacles in human life is the sight of an old man sustaining his career of action or endurance, to the last, with an unwavering spirit. Such was Wesley. He sought no repose from his labours till death. Activity was the normal condition of happiness to him, as it must be to all healthful minds. After the eightieth year of his age he visited Holland twice. At the end of his eighty-second we have seen him recording, "I am never tired with writing, preaching, or travelling." The scene of his preaching under trees which he had planted himself at Kingswood, and when most of his old disciples there were dead, and their children's children surrounded him, has perhaps no parallel in history. He outlived most of his first preachers, and stood up, mighty in intellect and labours, among the second and third generations of his people; and it is affecting to trace him through his latter years, when persecution had subsided, and he was everywhere received as a patriarch, sometimes exciting, by his arrival in towns and cities, an interest such as the king himself would produce. He attracted the largest assemblies which have been congregated for religious instruction in modern ages, being estimated sometimes at more than thirty thousand. Great intellectually, morally, and physically, when at length he died, in the eighty-eighth year of his age and sixty-fifth of his ministry, he was unquestionably one of the most extraordinary men of any age.

He lived to see Methodism spread through Great Britain, America, and the West India Islands. Hundreds of travelling and thousands of local preachers, and tens of thousands of followers, were connected with him at his death. And how have they multiplied since? Though there are men still living who heard him preach, yet the epitaph of Sir Christopher Wren, in St. Paul's Cathedral, the work of his own genius, is already applicable to Wesley's memory in almost all the Protestant world: "Do you ask for his monument? Look around you."

Such was the life of Wesley in its outlines; a minute examination of his traits can only confirm these more striking characteristics.

As a preacher he remains a problem to us. It is at least very difficult to explain, at this remote day, the secret of his great power in the pulpit, aside from the divine influence which is pledged to all faithful ministers. Whitefield may be considered the chief model, if not the founder, of that popular and powerful hortatory preaching which, since his day, has been characteristic of Methodism, and which still thunders along its great American circuits, and shakes the vast multitudes of its assemblies in the wilderness and in its camp-meetings. Charles Wesley, Fletcher, and many others of the early Methodist preachers, were good examples of it; men of emotion, of passion, tears, and native eloquence. Wesley, perspicuous, logical, peculiarly self-possessed and calm, was nevertheless more powerful than any of them in the influence of his discourses on both the sensibilities and the understandings of his hearers. The marvellous physical effects which attended the first Methodist preaching, began earlier as we have seen, and were more frequent, under Wesley's discourses than under Whitefield's. They continued, more or less, till the end of his career. There must have been some peculiar power in his address which the records of the times have failed to describe; something more than what we can infer from the descriptions of those who heard him, and who tell us that his attitude in the pulpit was graceful and easy; his action calm and natural, yet pleasing and expressive; his voice not loud, but clear, agreeable, and masculine; and his style neat and perspicuous.*

The obviously great character of the man, and the prestige of his singular career, doubtless gave authority to his word, so that his hearers felt as did Beattie, who heard him at Aberdeen, and who remarked, after one of his ordinary discourses, that "it was not a masterly sermon, yet none but a master could have preached it;" but before he had any such prestige his calm power in the pulpit was as great as at any later period. The stoutest hearts quailed before him; the most hardened men sank to the earth overwhelmed; infuriated mobs retreated, or oftener yielded, acknowledging the magic of his word; and their leaders, shouting in his defence above the din of the tumult, conducted him in safety to his lodgings. There was a trait of military coolness and command in his manner, at times, which reminds us of his namesake, the greatest captain of his country. It is doubtful whether, like Whitefield

* Crowther's Portraiture of Methodism, p. 68.

or Charles Wesley, he wept much in preaching; he exhorted and entreated, but he mostly spoke as "one having authority" from God. Hence the effectiveness of his rebukes, as often recorded in his journals. "Be silent or be gone," he cried once to a party of Papists in Ireland, who interrupted his services, "and their noise ceased." "A few gentry" disturbed one of his assemblies; he "rebuked them openly, and they stood corrected." "I rebuked him sharply," he writes of a certain character, "and he was ashamed." In a "brilliant congregation, among whom were honourable and right honourable persons," he says, "I felt they were given into my hands, for God was in the midst of us." At times, however, there was mixed with this authoritative power an overwhelming pathos. In the midst of a mob "I called," he writes, "for a chair; the winds were hushed, and all was calm and still; my heart was filled with love, my eyes with tears, and my mouth with arguments. They were amazed, they were ashamed, they were melted down, they devoured every word." That must have been genuine eloquence.

His Journals continually afford examples of his power over his opponents. On entering one of his congregations he meets a man who refuses to return his bow, or to kneel during the prayers, or to stand during the singing; but under the sermon his countenance changes; soon he turns his face abashed to the wall; he stands at the second hymn, kneels at the second prayer, and as Wesley goes out catches him by the hand, and takes leave of him "with a hearty blessing." As he approaches an outdoor assembly in another place, "a huge man" runs "fully against him;" he repeats the insult with oaths, and, pressing furiously through the crowd, plants himself close by the preacher. Before the close of the sermon his countenance changes; soon he takes off his hat, and when Wesley concludes, seizes his hand, "squeezes it earnestly, and goes away quiet as a lamb." He was once accosted in Moorfields by a drunkard who could hardly stand. Wesley conversed with him, and gave him his tract called "A Word to a Drunkard." "Sir, sir," he stammered, "I am wrong, I know I am wrong." He held Wesley by the hand for a full half hour. "I believe," says the latter, "he got drunk no more." In his prayers, as well as his exhortations, was this singular power manifest. "As we were concluding," he writes at Newcastle, "an eminent backslider came into my mind, and I broke out abruptly, 'Lord, is Saul also among the prophets? Is James Watson here? If he be, show thy power!' Down dropped James Watson like a stone, and began crying aloud."

The calm ministerial authority which so much characterized him was not assumed; it was the spontaneous effect of a true and a natural courage. Military men instinctively recognized it whenever they came into his presence; and soldiers were among his most respectful hearers and enthusiastic admirers. Had he been a military leader, there can be no doubt that he would have been the cool, intrepid man in the field that he was in the mob. It was not only his maxim always "to face the mob," but he invariably kept his ground till he conquered it. We have seen him pelted, pushed, dragged by clamorous thousands from village to village, in the night, while the rain descended in a storm, and yet as self-possessed "as if he were in his study;" and his calm voice, ringing in prayer above the noise, silenced with awe the excited multitude, and converted their leaders into defenders who safely delivered him. Such a man on a field of battle would have courageously done whatever was to be done, whether it were to lead a forlorn hope, to head a charge, or, more difficult still, to conduct a perilous retreat. It is doubtful whether John Wesley ever felt, or could readily feel, the emotion of terror. Such a susceptibility would seem to have been incompatible with his temperament. Not only in mobs, when his life was at stake, but in sudden and perilous accidents, he never lost his self-possession. As he was hastening through a narrow street a cart swiftly turned into it; he checked his horse, but was "shot over its head as an arrow from a bow," and lay with his arms and legs stretched in a line close to the wall. The wheel grazed along his side, soiling his clothes. "I found," he says, "no flutter of spirit, but the same composure as if I had been sitting in my study." Trifles, so called, often reveal the characters of great men better than their most conspicuous deeds. The bending forest shows the course of the storm, but straws show it as well, and quicker.*

A fine humour pervaded the nature of Wesley, and often gave a readiness and pertinency to his words. The devout Thomas Walsh, morbidly scrupulous, complained in a letter to him, that among the "three or four persons that tempted" him to levity, "you, sir, are one by your witty proverbs." Wesley's humour, however, enhanced the blandness of his piety, and enabled him sometimes to convey reproof in a manner which could hardly be resented with

* Southey expressed not publicly his full estimate of Wesley. Privately he said: "I consider him as the most influential mind of the last century—the man who will have produced the greatest effects centuries, or perhaps millenniums, hence, if the present race of men should continue so long."—Wilberforce's Corespondence.

ill-temper. "Michael Fenwick," he says, "was often hindered from settling in business, because God had other work for him to do. He is just made to travel with me, being an excellent groom, valet-de-chambre, nurse, and, upon occasion, a tolerable preacher." This good man one day was vain enough to complain to him that, though constantly travelling with him, his own name was never inserted in Wesley's published Journals. In the next number of the Journals he found his egotism effectually rebuked. "I left Epworth," wrote Wesley, "with great satisfaction, and, about one, preached at Clayworth. I think none were unmoved but Michael Fenwick, who fell fast asleep under an adjoining hayrick."

He could be noble in his reproofs as in all things else. Joseph Bradford was for many years his travelling companion, and considered no assistance to him too servile, but was subject to changes of temper. Wesley directed him to carry a package of letters to the post; Bradford wished to hear his sermon first; Wesley was urgent and insisted; Bradford refused. "Then," said Wesley, "you and I must part." "Very good, sir," replied Bradford. They slept over it. On rising the next morning Wesley accosted his old friend and asked if he had considered what he had said, that "they must part?" "Yes, sir," replied Bradford. "And must we part?" inquired Wesley. "Please yourself, sir," was the reply. "Will you ask my pardon?" rejoined Wesley. "No, sir." "You won't?" "No, sir," "Then I will ask yours!" replied the great man. Bradford melted under the example, and wept like a child.

The aptness of Wesley's replies sometimes took the form of severe repartee, but only when it was deserved. "Sir," said a blustering, low-lived man, who attempted to push against him and throw him down—"Sir, I never make way for a fool." "I always do," replied Wesley, stepping aside and calmly passing on.*

In befitting circumstances, however, no man could show more Christian meekness in the treatment of offences. At Dewsbury a person, full of rage, pressed through the throng, and struck him violently on the face with the palm of his hand. Wesley, with tears in his eyes, recollecting the precept of Christ, turned to him the other cheek. His assailant was awed by his example, and slunk back into the crowd.†

No fact could better refute the imputation of fanaticism to Wesley, than the catholic spirit which he so much enjoined and

* Wesleyan Magazine, 1843, p. 518.
† Walker's History of Methodism in Halifax, p. 122.

exemplified; for fanaticism is never charitable. We have seen how early he broke away from his High Church exclusiveness; with what regretful wonder he looked back upon it, and how steady and benignant was the progress of his self-development in all charitable sentiments. In 1765 he wrote to his Calvinistic friend Venn: "I desire to have a league, offensive and defensive, with every soldier of Christ. We have not only one faith, one hope, one Lord, but are directly engaged in one warfare. We are carrying the war into the devil's own quarters, who therefore summons all his hosts to war. Come then, ye that love God, to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty! I am now wellnigh *miles emeritus senex, sexagenarius;* [an old soldier who has served out his time, and is entitled to his discharge—a sexagenarian;] yet I trust to fight a little longer. Come and strengthen the hands, till you supply the place, of your weak but affectionate brother."*

He boasted, and had a right to boast, of the liberal terms of communion in his societies. "One circumstance more," he says, "is quite peculiar to the people called Methodists; that is, the terms upon which any person may be admitted into their society. They do not impose, in order to their admission, any opinions whatever. Let them hold particular or general redemption, absolute or conditional decrees. . . . They think, and let think. One condition, and one only, is required—a real desire to save their souls. Where this is, it is enough: they desire no more: they lay stress upon nothing else: they ask only, 'Is thy heart herein as my heart? if it be, give me thy hand.' Is there," he adds, "any other society in Great Britain or Ireland that is so remote from bigotry? that is so truly of a catholic spirit? so ready to admit all serious persons without distinction. Where is there such another society in Europe? in the habitable world? I know none. Let any man show it me that can. Till then let no one talk of the bigotry of the Methodists."†

This he wrote less than three years before his death. In these latter years of his life he was continually inculcating such sentiments among his people; he often took occasion of his public assemblies to expound formally this liberality of his cause. When in his eighty-fifth year, preaching in Glasgow, he says: "I subjoined a short account of Methodism, particularly insisting on the circumstance—There is no other religious society under heaven which

* Works, vol. xiii. † *Ibid.*, vol. xiii.

requires nothing of men, in order to their admission into it, but a desire to save their souls. Look all round you, you cannot be admitted into the Church or society of the Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Quakers, or any others, unless you hold the same opinions with them, and adhere to the same mode of worship. The Methodists alone do not insist on your holding this or that opinion. . . . Now, I do not know any other religious society, either ancient or modern, wherein such liberty of conscience is now allowed, or has been allowed since the age of the Apostles. Here is our glorying, and a glorying peculiar to us. What society shares it with us?"

When eighty-six years old he still repeats the noble boast. "I returned," he says, "to Redruth, and applied to the great congregation, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.' I then met the society, and explained at large the rise and nature of Methodism; and still aver I have never read or heard of, either in ancient or modern history, any other Church which builds on so broad a foundation as the Methodists do; which requires of its members no conformity either in opinions or modes of worship, but barely this one thing, to fear God and work righteousness."

His only restriction on opinions in his societies was, that they should not be obtruded for discussion or wrangling in their devotional meetings; not the creed of a man, but his moral conduct respecting it, was a question of discipline with Primitive Methodism. The possible results of such liberality were once discussed in the Conference. Wesley conclusively determined the debate by remarking, "I have no more right to object to a man for holding a different opinion from me, than I have to differ with a man because he wears a wig and I wear my own hair; but if he takes his wig off, and begins to shake the powder about my eyes, I shall consider it my duty to get quit of him as soon as possible."*

"Is a man," he writes, "a believer in Jesus Christ, and is his life suitable to his profession? are not only the main, but the sole inquiries I make in order to his admission into our society."† He abhorred controversy, and seldom engaged in it when it was not necessary in self-defence. "How gladly," he wrote to a newspaper, alluding to four simultaneous publications against him—"how gladly would I leave all these to themselves, and let them say just what

* Southey's Wesley, chap. 29. The London Quarterly Review (September 1853) says: "No reformer that the world ever saw so remarkably united faithfulness to the essential doctrines of revelation with charity toward men of every Church and creed."

† Journal, May 14, 1765. Works, vol. iii.

they please! as my day is far spent, and my taste for controversy is utterly lost and gone;" * and we have seen him lamenting that he "had to spend near ten minutes in controversy" in one of his public assemblies; more than "he had done in public for many months, perhaps years, before."

Wesley was not only in advance of his own age in this as in many other respects: he was in advance of ours. Many of his own people would now fear the consequences of such unusual liberality; he himself did acts which might subject any one of his preachers, in this day, to serious suspicion, if not to greater inconvenience. He abridged and published in his Arminian Magazine, as an example for his people, the life of Thomas Firmin, a Unitarian, and declared in his preface, that, though he had "long settled in his mind that the entertaining of wrong notions concerning the Trinity was inconsistent with real piety," yet, "as he could not argue against matter of fact," "he dare not deny that Mr. Firmin was a pious man, although his notions of the Trinity were quite erroneous." † He never hesitated to recognize the moral worth of any man, however branded in history, and however he himself differed from him in opinion. He "doubted whether that arch-heretic, Montanus, was not one of the holiest men of the second century." ‡ "Yea," he adds, "I would not affirm that the arch-heretic of the fifth century (Pelagius), as plentifully as he has been bespattered for many ages, was not one of the holiest men of that age." He admired the piety of the best papal writers, and made some of their works household books in Methodist families. At a time when the name of Arminius was a synonym of heresy, he not only openly acknowledged his evangelical orthodoxy, but boldly placed the branded name of the great misrepresented theologian on the periodical which he published as the organ of Methodism. It was his extraordinary liberality that made him a problem, if not a heretic, in the estimation of many of his pious contemporaries; and his sermon on the "Catholic Spirit" would excite a sensation of surprise, if not alarm, in many a modern orthodox congregation. Yet what modern theologian has held more tenaciously, or defined more accurately the doctrines of spiritual Christianity?

It is impossible that such a mind could be either weak or wicked; and it may be doubted whether the deeds or the sentiments of

* Journal, Nov. 22, 1760. † Arminian Magazine, 1786, p. 253.

‡ Sermon on "Wisdom of God's Counsels." Works, vol. vi.

John Wesley show most the genuine greatness of the man. His double excellence at least proves his double superiority over his age.

It has sometimes been asked whether he is entitled to rank in the highest class of great men? The question is vague, and hardly admits of an unqualified answer. Of the two highest classes of great minds—the speculative, or "philosophical" thinkers on the one hand; and the practical, comprising great legislators, captains, and inventors, on the other—it may be doubted which is entitled to the supremacy. The former, if we do not include in it the poetic, or rather the artistic genius, has afforded comparatively little advantage to mankind, beyond an exhibition of the greatness of the human faculties. Speculative inquiry has seldom given to the world a great demonstrated truth. It is doubtful that it has yet afforded a single unquestionable result in the highest field of its research—that sublime sphere of abstract truth which is usually called speculative philosophy; and its investigations of the constitution of the human mind are yet far from settling, with scientific certainty, any theory of psychology.

On the other hand, a single great practical life, sometimes a single act of such a life, has advanced appreciably the whole civilized world. A great captain has broken the chains of a nation. A great legislator has set free the energies of millions of men for progress in all useful enterprises. A single philanthropist has initiated improvements in the administration of justice which have alleviated the anguish of tens of thousands, have reformed the prison discipline and penal jurisprudence of his country, and promise yet to turn prisons into schools, and to render the gallows a barbarity, abhorrent as well to the justice as the mercy of mankind. A diffident, poor, and drudging artisan, by the invention of the steam-engine, has given to his own country an aggregate of steam-power equal to the hands of more than four hundred millions of men, more than equal to twice the number of males capable of labour on our planet—an invention which has already, in its combined power throughout the globe, a capacity for work equal to the male capacity for manual toil of five or six planets like ours: such a man may be said to create new worlds on the surface of our own.

Even the greatest mind which has influenced modern scientific inquiry, while teaching the world how to think, never discovered a new scientific fact. He gave not a single original invention to the practical arts, though his mighty intellect, expounding and systematizing a thought which was scientifically as old as Aristotle, and

practically as old as human reason, has directed all subsequent practical studies.

The classification of great men must inevitably be difficult and ambiguous; but the genius which most influences the sentiments, if not the intellect of men, the genius of great painters, sculptors, architects, and poets, may perhaps be more relevantly included in the class of great practical, than in that of great speculative minds. The speculations of Plato, Descartes, Leibnitz, and Kant, considered apart from the beneficial example of superior intellectual power which they present, have added little or nothing to the advancement of the race, and the few examples of practical utility which can be cited from the history of philosophic thinkers might be claimed as exceptional to their usual classification. Even the mathematics rank doubtfully, at least, between the two classes: the discoveries of Newton appertain to the physical world, and the greatest of his successors has legitimately placed the proudest monument of astronomical knowledge in the class of scientific mechanics. But amid the ambiguities which beset this question—a question more curious, perhaps, than important—there can be little hesitancy in placing John Wesley in the first rank of those historical men whose greatness in the legislature, the cabinet, the field, philanthropy, or any sphere of active life, is attributable to their practical sagacity, energy, and success. In these three respects what man in history transcends him? If it can be affirmed that he was far from being a great, a profound thinker; that, as some of his critics have pronounced, his mind was more "logical," or even "intuitional," * than philosophic, yet who can deny him the tribute of the historian of his country, that he conducted "a most remarkable moral revolution; was a man whose eloquence and logical acuteness might have rendered him eminent in literature; whose genius for government was not inferior to that of Richelieu, and who, whatever his errors may have been, devoted all his powers, in defiance of obloquy and derision, to what he sincerely considered the highest good of his species."† The somewhat vague affirmation that his mind was more intuitional

* The first is Coleridge's, the second Isaac Taylor's opinion.

† Macaulay, article on Southey's "Colloquies on Society," Edinburgh Review, 1830; and Essays, Critical and Miscellaneous. Buckle (History of Civilization in England, vol. i. chap. 7) says: "strongly as this is expressed, it will scarcely appear an exaggeration to those who have compared the success of Wesley with his difficulties."—Buckle pronounces Wesley "the first of theological statesmen."

than philosophical, if it has any meaning at all, must signify that his sagacity was so rapid and accurate that the processes of reasoning and judgment, usual in other men, were (not absent but) scarcely perceptible in his clear and prompt intellect. The results of the practical facts with which Wesley had to deal, like all the practical affairs of men, must always be contingent, and there can be no intuition of contingent results. Their right anticipation must be the effect of calculations and combinations of the intellect.

If Wesley was deficient in what constitutes the highest speculative or philosophic mind, this deficiency itself was perhaps a necessary qualification for the more utilitarian greatness to which he was appointed. It was necessary that he should be a great legislator, in order to render secure the fruits of his greatness in so many other respects. Speculative philosophers have seldom been good legislators; the history of great men affords not one example of the two characters combined. The Republic of Plato is still an ideal system of beautiful puerilities to statesmen; the Politics of Aristotle have seldom had a legislative copyist; the Utopia of Sir Thomas More is still a Utopia, the source of proverbial expression to our language, but of no laws to our commonwealths; the new Atlantis of Bacon is yet a dream, notwithstanding its utilitarian suggestions; Locke's Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina were found impracticable; and Rousseau's *Contrat Social* ranks only as an example of political rhetoric. But John Wesley founded an ecclesiastical system which has only become more efficient by the lapse of a hundred years, and which is acknowledged to be more effective, whether for good or evil, than any other in the Protestant world. More than has been usual with the founders of systems of policy, whether in Church or State, it was his own work. His most invidious though most entertaining biographer has acknowledged his ability as a legislator, and conceded that "whatever power was displayed in the formation of the economy of Methodism was his own."* He began his great work not only without prestige, as has been shown, but in entirely adverse circumstances. The moral condition of the nation, which required his extraordinary plans, was the most formidable difficulty to their prosecution. He threw himself out upon the general demoralization without reputation, without influential friends, without money, with no other resource than the soul within him and the God above him. Before he had fairly begun his great career, he was reduced even below the ordinary advantages of common English clergymen;

* Southey's Wesley, chap. 29.

he had become already the object of derision; he had no church, and was turned out of the pulpits of his brethren. Excepting some insignificant societies, like that of Fetter Lane, the highway or the field and the reckless mob were all that remained to him. But he began his work; he united his rude converts into "Bands," formed "Classes," built Chapels, appointed Trustees, Stewards, Leaders, Exhorters; organized a Lay Ministry, and rallied into it men of extraordinary characters and talents; founded the Conference; gave his societies a discipline and a constitution, a literature, a psalmody, and a liturgy; saw his cause established in the United States with an episcopal organization, planted in the British North American Provinces, and in the West Indies, and died at last with his system apparently completed, universally effective and prosperous, sustained by five hundred and fifty itinerant and thousands of local preachers, and more than a hundred and thirty thousand members;* and so energetic that many men who had been his co-labourers lived to see it the predominant body of Dissenters in the United Kingdom and the British Colonies, the most numerous Church of the United States of America, and successfully planted on most of the outlines of the Missionary world.

The success of such a career depends, of course, much upon "circumstances;" but circumstances may develop great men, they cannot create them. He is great who can turn favourable circumstances to great account; he is greater who can create his own favourable circumstances, as well as turn them to account. Wesley did both if any man in history ever did. The success which depends on external conditions is often impaired or defeated by the lack of the comprehensive vigilance and skill which can control the whole series of circumstances essential to success; often the critical one in the series may be obscure; the key to the whole may, therefore, be lost in an unguarded emergency, and many a career, splendidly begun, has thus come to an impotent conclusion. It was next to impossible for Wesley to have failed in this manner. Not only his clear discernment saw, but his unintermitted and steady energy seized and appropriated all facilities, small and great. If it should be said that he had superfluous labours, it certainly cannot be said that he had deficient diligence; and, if he sometimes availed himself of unnecessary circumstances, it was hardly possible he could lose a necessary one.

Few men have shown more than Wesley that self-possession o

* Adding to the figures given at Wesley's last Conference the subsequent increase in America before his death.

repose which is characteristic of the greatest minds, and which art has instinctively impressed upon the classic works of antiquity. It was doubtless one of the causes as well as one of the indications of his power. He could not easily, if at all, be disconcerted, or thrown from the right attitude of his strength. We have seen how he moved, year after year, through varied and intolerable opposition —attacks from the press, the pulpit, and the mob; but he has always appeared to us the same calm, powerful man. It was not his temperament alone, but his faith, as much or more, which thus sustained him. He believed that he was right, and therefore trusted consequences to God; and wrongs, from which the noblest natures would most revolt, could not arrest or dismay him. During the Calvinistic controversy some of his opponents had the confidence of his intractable wife, who had not only deserted him, but had carried with her his papers and correspondence, and refused to return them.* The correspondence is known to have been interpolated in such way as to appear to justify her monomaniacal jealousy. It was about to be published in the *Morning Post* by his antagonists; but one of their own party, out of regard to the honour of religion, hastened to Charles Wesley, and entreated him to communicate the fact to his brother, that, if possible, the scandal might be averted. The letters were to be published on the morrow, but Wesley had an engagement to preach that day at Canterbury, and had promised to take with him the daughter of his brother, to gratify her curiosity with a view of the ancient Cathedral. Charles, alarmed at the prospect, hastened to the Foundry. "Never," writes his daughter, "shall I forget the manner in which my father accosted my mother on his return home. 'My brother,' said he, 'is indeed an extraordinary man. I placed before him the importance of the character of a minister; the evil consequences which might result from his indifference to it; the cause of religion; stumbling-blocks cast in the way of the weak; and urged him by every relative and public motive to answer for himself, and stop the publication.' His reply was, 'Brother, when I devoted to God my ease, my time, my life, did I except my reputation? No. Tell Sally I will take her to Canterbury to-morrow.' I ought to add, that the letters in question were satisfactorily proved to be mutilated, and no scandal resulted from his trust in God."

A fact like this, with a man like Wesley, speaks to all hearts, but its noblest significance can be known only to the noblest minds.

* See book iv. chap. 2.

But was he faultless? If he had been, he would have been less admirable to us; for the truest human greatness is in the combat with evil: he would have been less adapted for his great work, for to men rather than to angels has the Gospel been committed.

Besides the minute imperfections which belong to most men, Wesley has been charged with ambition and credulity.

The writer who dwells most upon the latter weakness has nevertheless, however inconsistently, deemed it a sort of fitness for Wesley's peculiar mission, and with a noticeable credulity himself, has supposed, as we have seen,* that even the mysterious noises at the Epworth rectory were preternatural, or at least extramundane, and were a means of laying open his faculty of belief, and of creating a right of way for the supernatural through his mind. When it is remembered that Wesley's age was one of general scepticism among thinkers, we cannot be surprised if he revolted, in his great work, to the opposite extreme, and the error was certainly on the best side. Credulity might injure his work, but scepticism would have ruined it, or rather would have rendered it impossible.

If his followers cannot deny the charge; if they must admit that in a certain form this defect pervades his Journals and fragmentary writings, yet should they make the admission with well-guarded qualifications. They should remind themselves that he seldom gives a direct opinion of the supposed preternatural cases which he so often records; that they are presented with circumstantial particularity as the data for an opinion on the part of others; that, singularly enough, and a noteworthy proof of his good sense, they seldom or never appear in his standard theological writings, hardly tinge the works which he left for the practical guidance of his people, but are almost invariably given as matters of curiosity and inquiry in his miscellaneous and fugitive writings; and that no one doctrine or usage of Methodism was permitted by him to bear the slightest impression of them to posterity.

The severity with which this weakness of Wesley has been treated by his critics, is an exception to the usual treatment of historical characters; for what great man has not had some marked eccentricity of opinion or conduct? And what was this defect of Wesley but an eccentricity of opinion? If it was characteristic of his opinions, it was not characteristic of the man; for what man was more rigorously practical in piety, or more liberal about opinions? What man ever combined the noble, self-possessed enthusiasm which is essential to the heroic character, with so little of the passion

* Book iv. chap. 3.

or uncharitableness which is essential to fanaticism? His critics would impair his authority as a thinker by contemning his credulity; but they deem it no wonder, or at least no detraction, if indeed not an amiable illustration of the heart, apart from the intellect, of his friend, the greatest writer as well as the greatest "moralist" of his age, who shared so largely this very weakness of Wesley. Men who sneer at Wesley are but amused when, in reading the pages of Boswell, they find Johnson dissenting from a ghost story of Wesley, only because the latter did not, in his opinion, investigate the case sufficiently, and affirming that "this is a question which, after five thousand years, is yet undecided; a question, whether in theology or philosophy, one of the most important that can come before the human understanding."* Plato, as Johnson called Wesley, might certainly linger when all the rest of the audience had slunk away, if Johnson still stood in the lecturer's desk. The Cock Lane ghost story has never impaired Johnson's rank as an author; but had Wesley shown the superstitious weakness of the literary giant in many well-known and ludicrous instances, he could scarcely have been treated with more scorn than he has incurred by his record of supposed preternatural facts, of a class, too, which have not yet ceased to be believed by the most of mankind. He recorded these facts, it should be borne in mind, in an age in which Christian Scotland executed at the stake a supposed witch,† and in the next century after that in which the good Sir Matthew Hale had condemned to the gibbet two women for witchcraft, and the great Bacon had avowed his belief in astrology, and sat in a

* Boswell's Johnson, anno 1778. "A man who told him of a water-spout or a meteoric stone, generally had the lie direct given him for his pains. A man who told him of a prediction or a dream wonderfully accomplished, was sure of a courteous hearing. . . . . He related with a grave face how old Mr. Cave, of St. John's Gate, saw a ghost, and how this ghost was something of a shadowy being. He went himself on a ghost-hunt to Cock Lane, and was angry with John Wesley for not following up another scent of the same kind with proper spirit and perseverance."—Macaulay's Essays.

† This, the last victim in Scotland, was burned, according to Sir Walter Scott, as late as 1722. Blackstone, the contemporary of Wesley, says: "To deny the possibility, nay, actual existence, of witchcraft and sorcery, is at once flatly to contradict the revealed word of God in various passages both of the Old and New Testament; and the thing itself is a truth to which every nation in the world hath in its turn borne testimony, either by examples seemingly well attested, or by prohibitory laws, which, at least, suppose the possibility of a commerce with evil spirits."—Commentaries, book iv. chap. 4. sect. 6. Buckle (Hist. of Civ., vol. i. p. 334) quotes a similar opinion from Wesley, but forgets this of his great contemporary.

Parliament in which an enactment was passed against witchcraft—a statute which was not repealed till Wesley himself was thirty-three years old.

The treatment which Wesley had received on account of this one weakness, so different from the usual charity of writers toward great men, is perhaps a real though undesigned compliment. It would seem to arise from the fact, that little else can be found in his pure life and noble character for sarcasm, and that this therefore must be made as available as possible.

It has not, however, sufficed to prevent the imputation to him of ambition. This charge affords, in fine, the chief explanation of his extraordinary life to his best known biographer. According to that writer, "no conqueror or poet was ever more ambitious," and "the love of power was the ruling passion of his mind." It is due to Southey, however, to say that he acknowledged the error of this charge. An admirable defence of Wesley by a Churchman,* who personally knew him during many years, convinced the biographer of his error. "I had," he says, "formed a wrong estimate of Wesley's character, in supposing him to have been actuated by ambition." † A letter is also extant in which he again confesses that he "was convinced that he was mistaken in supposing ambition entered largely into Mr. Wesley's acting impulses," and promises "to make such alterations in the book as are required in consequence." ‡

That Wesley loved power would be no very serious charge. Power, as a means of success and usefulness, may be as desirable as

* Alexander Knox, Esq. See Appendix to Southey's Wesley.

† "I now believe," he adds, "that he (Knox) was right, and in my new edition I shall acknowledge it." I quote from a conversation of Southey with Joseph Carne, Esq., F.R.S., &c., given in Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i. book iii. chap. 1.

‡ Letter from Southey to James Nichols, Esq. See Appendix to this volume. Smith gives an engraved fac-simile of the letter. Southey's son, Rev. C. Cuthbert Southey, avoids any allusion to this change of his father's opinion, in his edition of the Life of Wesley. The London Quarterly Review (September, 1853, p. 56) remarks: "It is well known that Dr. Southey greatly modified his published views of Wesley's character, wholly retracting the charge of an ambitious purpose in the formation of his societies; and it is no less certain that he made considerable preparations for an amended edition of the biography, which, indeed, was advertised as being in the press just previously to the author's lamentable illness. Yet the son, upon whom the task of publication ultimately devolved, has thought proper to suppress every sign of this important change, and has suffered his father's memory to lose the advantage even of its bare acknowledgment. The reproach, in justice, will recoil upon himself."

any other talent, as genius itself; the vice is not in the passion, but in its motive; to indulge it for selfish ends would be pernicious and criminal, as the pursuit of money or of any other means of success would be; but, as a means for the accomplishment of good ends, it may be as virtuous as the diligent pursuit of resources by the philanthropist, or of intelligence by the student. Wesley's whole life was a demonstration that he sought not power for himself. What man ever more thoroughly sacrificed the usual selfish motives of ambition? What human life was ever more consecrated to the welfare of others? That he had a conscious pleasure in the useful exercise of his great but unsought power, need not be denied; it was the right of his power, as his power was the prerogative of his talents and position. He would have been an exception to the usual and beneficent law of nature herself, in this respect, had he not known that exalted pleasure. Nature accompanies her endowments with instinctive dispositions for their use. The man who is constituted or capacitated for the exercise of power, would not be in harmony with himself if he had not the instinctive enjoyment of his appointed task; and the highest moral law of his position requires, not that he should be unconscious of this enjoyment, but that he should consecrate it by benevolent motives, and regulate it by that "temperance in all things" which, if it is a self-denial to the vices, is still more an enhancement of the virtues.

Many of the foregoing remarks apply to Wesley's personal religious character, and on that subject scarcely an additional word is needed. "By their fruits ye shall know them," and the whole of our narrative is an illustration of his piety. One observation, however, is worthy of emphatic record: that while few, if any, modern public teachers have treated more of the principles of the spiritual life, or held up a higher standard of them—of Justification, Regeneration, Sanctification, and the evidences and tests which apply to them—few, if any, have been more exempt from the taint of Mysticism. We have seen him throwing to the winds the Mystic doctrines while returning, on the ocean, from Georgia; and it is a noteworthy fact, that except the early and comparatively brief period of his spiritual awakening, and of his intercourse with the Moravian brethren, the minute record of his life, presented in his Journals, contains hardly an instance of that introspective and hypochondriacal anxiety which so much mars most religious biographies. We meet in this wonderful autobiography with occasional and brief ejaculations of prayer and praise, but with no self-anatomization. It is vigorous with the cheerful moral health

of his own mind throughout, however marred by the narration of disease in other minds. Methodism spread so rapidly, and was so much in contrast with the religious teachings of the times, that it was natural enough it should come in contact with morbid consciences almost everywhere; some of the characters sketched in the preceding pages were doubtless subjects of mental as well as moral disease, but Methodism was not responsible for the fact. It found such sufferers scattered throughout its course; if in some instances they sought in it excitement which could only exasperate their infirmity, it nevertheless, in most instances, brought them the relief which they could not find in the heartless religious instructions of the age. And, above all, the practical character of Wesley's own genius was so impressed upon his discipline, that religious melancholy was usually sooner or later dispelled by the energetic and beneficent practical habits to which his followers were trained. Without designing it, he established a religious system which, while it could not fail to attract diseased minds, was singularly adapted, in both its hopeful theology and its active discipline, to cure them; and there has been occasion in these pages to record not a few affecting cases of chronic mental disease, in which life was rendered not only tolerable, but useful and holy, and death itself joyful, by the moral support of the Gospel as taught in the doctrines and embodied in the regimen of Methodism. Hundreds of sufferers, as they read this remark, will confirm it with grateful tears.

To our more common human sympathies the character of Wesley presents attractions rarely to be found in the records of the lives of great men. Such records usually ignore the more personal or intimate traits of public characters. It would seem, indeed, to be assumed in them, that exhibitions of the common affections of our nature would derogate from their subjects, as reducing them too much to the common level of humanity; whereas it is precisely in these respects that the common mind most readily recognizes them, and the revelations of the heart in the life show the real man more infallibly than the revelations of the intellect. It is doubtless true, also, that public men, absorbed in plans of ambition, or even of usefulness, often lose to some extent those sensibilities which make the whole race akin, and the loss of which can be compensated by no other virtues. Perhaps the truest proof of the highest style of character is presented in the coexistence of an unimpaired heart with the highest development of the intellect, or the greatest energy of life. To the mass of mankind, including the best of them, the character of Luther would lose half its interest and worth,

were his passion for music and for nature, his sympathy for his friends, his fondness for his children, and his love of the virtuous and beautiful Catharine von Bora unrecorded. Not only to the common heart, but to the discernment of the highest minds, the pure and mighty Reformer did a nobler deed in rescuing the nun of Nimptsch, and in restoring her to her appropriate sphere as a woman, by placing her in his own home and heart, than he did by wresting from the grasp of the Pope the sceptre of universal religious domination. Wesley's greatness as a public man is hardly more distinctly recorded than his amiability and tenderness as a private man. We have continually had occasion, in these pages, to admire his personal, apart from his public character. Where can we find, in the record of historical men a more unimpaired heart amid the labours and hostilities of a long public career? His friendships were strong, even to weakness. His love of nature retained the freshness of youth in the decay of age; it was not so much a sentiment of taste, as an instinct of his own nature, a loving fellowship with the universal nature. His temper, sometimes, yet only momentarily, ruffled, had not merely the serenity of health, but was radiant with religious joyfulness, and playful in extreme age with the blandest humour. While moving the realm by his activity and moral power, he was the welcome guest of humble households, the delight of dinner-tables, the familiar companion of children. While hundreds of stalwart itinerants responded to his commands, as veterans to the orders of a hero on the field, and mobs recoiled before his calm but mighty word, and rude armies of ten, twenty, thirty thousands listened, wept, or prayed under his discourses, on the mountain sides or in the market-places, his sympathetic presence brought light and consolation to the hearths of desolate homes, to the despair of deathbeds, to the guilt and anguish of prisons, to the frenzy even of the madhouse. But did this man —so great, and yet so simple that the simplicity of his anomalous life seems the most inexplicable fact of his greatness—in his stern, inflexible career, extending through the most of a century, in his life apparently never knowing privacy, did he himself know the affections and tenderness which he so generally excited, the sorrow which he so often touched and turned into joy—did his "heart know its own bitterness?" Was this never-resting life—these wanderings to and fro while more than two generations of men were passing away—the effect of a passion for public life which had extinguished the usual instincts of the heart for wife, children, and home, for the privacy in which the heart best lives, for quiet and

rest and the affections? How often have we seen him, in scenes of rural repose, or domestic virtue, longing for relief from the restless duties of his career; for a home, however humble, where, with books and meditative tranquillity, he might live more unto himself, or for the few that might be dearer to him than himself! But one sublime and mysterious word always broke the spell of these seductive wishes—Eternity! "I believe there is an eternity, and must arise and go hence!" Poetry and music were natural endowments with him, as with most of his remarkable family. His correspondence with his unhappy wife, it is said, reveals the tenderest sensibility—a heart which proves him capable of having been the most affectionate of husbands. His numerous published letters to female correspondents are the most characteristic of his writings; they are fervid with pure and delicate sentiment. This man who worked so mightily could also love intensely. He never deemed it necessary to record an apology for his affection for Grace Murray. All accounts of her show that she was worthy of him; that she possessed not only rare attractions of person and manners, but of heart. She combined an indefinable charm of character with extraordinary talents; she formed and regulated many of Wesley's female classes in the north of England; she travelled with him in Ireland, and with womanly grace and modesty, as well as skilful ability, promoted among the women of Methodism the great work in which he was engaged. She reciprocated his affection for her, though with shrinking diffidence.* His hopes were defeated by the management of his brother and Whitefield, who probably apprehended that domestic life would interfere with his public labours, and hastily secured her marriage to one of his preachers. We have seen how bitterly he felt his loss;† and the relief which he sought in unslackened devotion to his great work is proof of his own genuine greatness rather than of his want of sensibility. He kept the painful recollection locked in his own heart, never obtruding it in any of his subsequent published letters, except in one instance when he ministered relief to a Christian friend, in a similar sorrow, by referring to his own, the keenness of which he describes as extreme. He "saw his friend that was, and him to whom she was sacrificed," immediately after the sacrifice, but never again records an allusion to her except in the single instance mentioned, and a poetical account of her history and of his affection for her, which he kept sacredly during his life, but which was dis-

* See his poetical account in the Appendix.

† See book iii. chap. 2, and book iv. chap. 2.

covered and published by one of his biographers—a long, sad, heart-touching narrative, in which he dwells with minutest interest on every recollection of the case. It is as fine an example of his poetical style as of his heart.* The preacher whom Grace Murray married left Wesley's Connection. He died in ten years after his marriage; the lady survived till 1803. She rejoined the Methodists, was many years a class-leader among them, and lived and died esteemed and beloved by them. Wesley pursued his career without once turning aside to re-open the wound in either heart by an interview. When eighty-five years old he allowed himself, however, the pleasure of a single conversation with her. She was in London, and expressed a wish to see him. Accompanied by Henry Moore, he called upon her. Though he "preserved more than his usual self-possession," the meeting, says Moore, was affecting. It did not continue long, and Moore never heard him mention her name afterward.

Such, then, was the character of John Wesley; a character which no candid historian can, after a thorough study of his life and works, deny to him, however desirable it might seem to be able to attribute to him greater faults for the sake of an apparently more impartial estimate. The candid student of history will be able to find in all its records but few men who had fewer faults, however many he may suppose he finds who had greater abilities or greater virtues.

We shall see, as we now turn to a fuller consideration of his opinions, his ecclesiastical discipline, the extraordinary means of popular improvement which he founded, and their results, that the historical importance of his life has not been exaggerated.

* "Such was the friend, than life more dear,
Whom in one luckless, baleful hour,
(For ever mentioned with a tear!)
The tempter's unresisted power
(O the unutterable smart!)
Tore from my inly-bleeding heart."—*See Appendix.*

BOOK VI.

THE DOCTRINES, DISCIPLINE, LITERATURE, AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF METHODISM.

CHAPTER I.

WESLEY'S DOCTRINES AND OPINIONS.

Historical Standpoint of Methodism—It taught the Doctrines of the Anglican Church, but taught them with new distinctness and power—Wesley's View of the Moral System of the Universe—The Moral Constitution and Fall of Man—The Moral Economy of our World, as modified by the Atonement—Evil will ultimate in Good—Wesley's Opinion on the Fate of the Heathen—His views of Justification—Of Regeneration—Of Sanctification—His Use of the Phrase Christian Perfection—His Definition of it—His Definition of Saving Faith—His Doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit—It is a Doctrine of the General Church—Sir William Hamilton's Testimony—Wesley's Cautions on the Subject—Historical Importance of the Doctrines of Methodism—Wesley's Views of the Brute Creation—Its Immortality—Gradation of the Living Creation—Demoniacal Agency—Physical Phenomena of Religious Excitement—The "Jerks"—Religious Catalepsy—Wesley's Doctrine of Providence—He denies the Distinction between a General and Special Providence.

REMARKABLE as were the agents and principal events of Methodism, thus far narrated, we cannot adequately estimate it without a fuller consideration of its teachings, its discipline, institutions, literature, and other characteristics. Though we have carefully noted their successive development, we have now reached a period where we may properly pause and review them more comprehensively.

The historical or philosophical standpoint of Methodism has been sufficiently defined in the outset of this narrative,* and it has not been deemed necessary to restate it often in general remarks. The current of events has flowed naturally from this its fountain-

* Book i. chap. 1.

head, and has been a continuous illustration of the providential design of the great movement—the revival of spiritual life in the Churches, and its extension beyond them. Wesley never lost sight of this distinctive mission of his cause. All its teachings, all its practical adaptations, contemplated this one capital purpose.

He professed to adhere faithfully to the fundamental theology of the Church of England. The theological distinction of Methodism lay not in novel tenets, but in the clearness and power with which it illustrated and applied the established doctrines of the English Reformation ; and, in harmony with its own characteristic design, it nearly confined its teachings to such of these doctrines as relate to personal or spiritual religion : repentance, faith, justification, regeneration, sanctification, and the witness of the Spirit. These great Scriptural truths have never, since the earliest age of the Church, been more precisely defined, or presented in a more homogeneous system, than in the works of Wesley and Fletcher, and the other standard Methodist writers. They have been the life-energy of Methodism throughout its whole range ; and have doubtless contributed not a little, by their habitual prominence, to promote the evangelical liberality of the denomination, by placing in subordination the polemical themes which have usually disturbed the harmony and wasted the energy of Christendom. "Our main doctrines, which include all the rest," said Wesley, "are repentance, faith, and holiness. The first of these we account, as it were, the porch of religion ; the next the door ; the third, religion itself." *

In his admirable sermon on the Properties of the Law,† Wesley has attempted to define the basis of all theology. The moral system of the universe—the "moral law"—is a unit. It is not an arbitrary enactment by the Supreme Ruler, but grows out of his own essential nature. God is a law to himself in this respect. "The law of God is supreme, unchangeable reason ; it is unalterable rectitude ; it is the everlasting fitness of all things that are or ever were created." Its apparent modifications, in its application to different states of the moral universe, are not essential changes, but the same unaltered and unalterable law in varied conditions. It reigns among the sons of light in higher worlds ; it was the government of unfallen man in paradise ; it is the supreme unchangeable law in our fallen world, the Atonement being supplemental to it, mercifully to provide for man's transgressions. As subjects of law, intelligent beings must have moral freedom, other-

* Principles of a Methodist further explained, Works, vol. viii.
† Works, vol. v.

wise they could not be moral agents. "For this end he endowed them with understanding to discern truth from falsehood, good from evil, and, as a necessary result of this, with liberty—a capacity of choosing the one and refusing the other. By this they were likewise enabled to offer him a free and willing service; a service rewardable in itself, as well as most acceptable to their gracious Master."

By the fall of man a new condition intervened in the moral system, so far as its application to our planet is concerned. Man died spiritually. If Wesley did not like the phrase "total depravity," yet he evidently agreed with the usual definition of that phrase by theologians. Men fell, as a race, in Adam; all are corrupt, not by the imputation of Adam's sin, but by the natural corruption "which is engendered of the offspring of Adam;" for man's moral nature is inherited in a sense analogous to the hereditary derivation of his physical and intellectual natures, with their respective infirmities.* Wesley did not like the vague term "sovereignty," which has led to so many wranglings and absurdities among dogmatic theologians. Whatever God does is done not from arbitrary choice, but because it is right, for to do right is a law and a necessity of the Divine nature; and the distinction between right and wrong is not arbitrary with God, but arises from his essential attributes. The continuation of the human race after the fall, without provision for its unborn millions, we cannot conceive to be reconcilable with the Divine justice. Man, therefore, though utterly fallen, is continued in existence under a new and gracious economy. Every human being receives the divine aid which is necessary for his responsibility to the Divine law. Men then have good within them, though not from themselves. All who die in infancy, all idiots, or other irresponsible persons, are provided for by the Atonement—the essential condition of the new moral economy of the fallen world.† All heathen will be judged under that gracious economy

* He did not believe in the infusion, but in the generation of souls. See Journal, Jan. 27, 1762, and Oct. 25, 1763. Correct by these his note on Heb. xii. 9.

† Wesley contended that the infinite wisdom and goodness which introduced a system under which evil was a possibility, will bring good out of evil. "But this is nowise inconsistent with the justice and goodness of God, because all may recover, through the second Adam, whatever they lost through the first. Not one child of man finally loses thereby, unless by his own choice. A remedy has been provided which is adequate to the disease. Yea, more than this, mankind have gained by the fall," &c. He proceeds to show at length in what respects.

according to the light they have; all responsible sinners who repent and receive the atonement, will be pardoned, and if faithful to the end will be saved.*

He discriminates three stages, or rather three distinctions, in the personal experience of the great "salvation" thus provided.†

Justification is distinguished from regeneration only logically. It is a relative fact—a work done for us rather than in us—the pardon of sin, whereby the relation of the sinner to the Divine law is changed, and he is recognized through the Atonement as no longer guilty, but just, and has "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Regeneration is a work wrought by the Holy Spirit in the believing soul, whereby it passes from death unto life, and, receiving "the spirit of adoption," enters into communion with God.

Sanctification, as a doctrine, received peculiar illustration and enforcement from Wesley, and the standard Methodist writers generally. It is the purification of the believer subsequently to regeneration. It is usually gradual; it may be instantaneous, as, like justification, it is received by faith. "When we begin to believe," Wesley said in his Minutes of Conference, "then sanctification begins; and as faith increases holiness increases." But this experience, he taught, should be sought immediately; and, as it is obtained by faith, it is the privilege of all believers at any time. He called it "perfection," a name which has incurred no little animadversion, but which he used as Scriptural, and as having been so used by Law, Lucas, Macarius, Fenelon, and other writers, Protes-

* As a Creator, says Wesley, God acts according to his "sovereign will;" for in his creative acts justice is not involved, as nothing is due to what has no being; but in regard to the heathen, and the apparent disadvantages of some men from their external conditions, he says: "What an amazing difference there is as to the means of improvement between one born and brought up in a pious English family, and one born and bred among the Hottentots. Only we are sure the difference cannot be so great as to necessitate one to be good, or the other to be evil; to force one into everlasting glory, or the other into everlasting burnings." For, as a governor, the Almighty "cannot possibly act according to his own mere sovereign will, but, as he has expressly told us, according to the invariable rules both of justice and mercy." "Whatever, therefore, it hath pleased him to do of his sovereign pleasure as Creator, ... he will judge the world in righteousness, and every man therein, according to the strictest justice. He will punish no man for doing any thing which he could not possibly avoid; neither for omitting any thing which he could not possibly do."—*Thoughts upon God's Sovereignty.* There was not only a generous human feeling, but a direct common-sense, in all Wesley's opinions on such subjects.

† Sermons, Works, vols. v. vi. vii., *passim.*

tant and Papal. Clemens Alexandrinus had drawn out Paul's doctrine of Christian perfection, though with some defects, in a portraiture of the perfect Christian. Wesley's statement of the doctrine, in its right analysis, agrees with the highest standards of the theological world.* He differed from them only in his clearer and more urgent promulgation of the great truth; in making it an exoteric rather than an esoteric opinion; in declaring that what other theologians taught as a possibility—the rare enjoyment of some, was the privilege of all. Fletcher has given us a remarkable essay on the doctrine, proving it to be Scriptural, and in accordance with the theological teachings of the best divines.† Wesley wrote an elaborate treatise upon it.‡ He taught not absolute or Adamic, but Christian perfection. Perfect Christians "are not," he says, "free from ignorance, no, nor from mistake. We are no more to expect any man to be infallible than to be omniscient. . . . From infirmities none are perfectly freed till their spirits return to God; neither can we expect, till then, to be wholly freed from temptation; for 'the servant is not above his Master.' But neither in this sense is there any absolute perfection on earth. There is no perfection of degrees, none which does not admit of a continual increase."

To one of his correspondents he says: "The proposition which I will hold is this: 'A person may be cleansed from all sinful tempers, and yet need the atoning blood.' For what? For 'negligences and ignorances;' for both words and actions, (as well as omissions,) which are in a sense transgressions of the perfect law. And I believe no one is clear of these till he lays down this corruptible body."§ Perfection, as defined by Wesley, is not then perfection according to the absolute moral law; it is what he calls it, *Christian perfection;* perfection according to the new moral economy introduced by the Atonement, in which the heart being sanctified fulfils the law by love, (Rom. xii. 9, 10,) and its involuntary imperfections are provided for by that economy, without the imputation of guilt, as in the case of infancy and all irresponsible persons.

The only question, then, can be, is it possible for good men so to love God that all their conduct, inward and outward, shall be swayed by love? that even their involuntary defects shall be swayed by it? Is there such a thing as the inspired writer calls the "perfect love" which "casteth out fear?" (1 John iv. 18.) Wesley believed that

* See pp. 338, 339. † Last Check to Antinomianism.
‡ Plain Account of Christian Perfection. § Letter 190, Works, vol. xii.

there is; that it is the privilege of all saints; and that it is to be received by faith.

In a letter to one of his female correspondents he says: "I want you to be *all love*. This is the perfection I believe and teach; and this perfection is consistent with a thousand nervous disorders, which that high-strained perfection is not. Indeed my judgment is, that (in this case particularly) to overdo is to undo; and that to set perfection too high, is the most effectual way of driving it out of the world." When he thus explained his opinion to Bishop Gibson, the prelate replied: "Why, Mr. Wesley, if this is what you mean by perfection, who can be against it?" "Man," he says, "in his present state, can no more attain Adamic than angelic perfection. The perfection of which man is capable, while he dwells in a corruptible body, is the complying with that kind command: 'My son, give me thy heart!' It is the loving the Lord his God, with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind." Such was his much misrepresented doctrine of Christian perfection.

The Faith which he taught as the condition of justification, regeneration, and sanctification, he has defined with much particularity. "Taking the word in a more particular sense, faith is a Divine evidence and conviction, not only that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself;' but also that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me. It is by faith (whether we term it the essence, or rather a property thereof) that we receive Christ, that we receive him in all his offices, as prophet, priest, and king. It is by this that he is 'made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.'" Again he says: "It is not an opinion, nor any number of opinions put together, be they ever so true. A string of opinions is no more Christian faith, than a string of beads is Christian holiness. The faith by which the promise is attained, is represented by Christianity as a power wrought by the Almighty in an immortal spirit, inhabiting a house of clay, to see through that veil into the world of spirits, into things invisible and eternal; a power to discern those things which, with eyes of flesh and blood, no man hath seen, or can see; either by reason of their nature, which (though they surround us on every side) is not perceivable by these gross senses; or by reason of their distance, as being yet afar off in the bosom of eternity. It is the eye of the new-born soul, whereby every true believer 'seeth Him who is invisible.' It is the ear of the soul, whereby the sinner 'hears the voice of the Son of God and lives;' the palate of the soul (if the expression may be allowed), whereby a believer 'tastes

the good word of God and the powers of the world to come;' the feeling of the soul, whereby, 'through the power of the Highest overshadowing him,' he perceives the presence of Him in whom he lives, and moves, and has his being, and feels the love of God shed abroad in his heart. It is the internal evidence of Christianity, a perpetual revelation, equally strong, equally new, through all the centuries which have elapsed since the incarnation, and passing now, even as it has done from the beginning, directly from God into the believing soul. 'It is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, if thou believest in the Lord Jesus Christ.' *This*, then, *is the record*, this is the evidence, emphatically so called, *that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* Why, then, have not all men this faith? Because no man is able to work it in himself; it is a work of Omnipotence. It requires no less power to quicken a dead soul than to raise a body that lies in the grave. May not your own experience teach you this? Can you give yourself this faith? Is it in your power to see, or hear, or taste, or feel God? to raise in yourself any perception of God, or of an invisible world? to open an intercourse between yourself and the world of spirits? to discern either them or him that created them? to burst the veil that is on your heart, and let in the light of eternity? You know it is not. You not only do not, but cannot (by your own strength) thus believe. The more you labour so to do, the more you will be convinced it is the gift of God. No merit, no goodness in man, precedes the forgiving love of God. His pardoning mercy supposes nothing in us but a sense of mere sin and misery; and to all who see, and feel, and own their wants, and their utter inability to remove them, God freely gives faith, for the sake of Him 'in whom he is always well pleased.' Whosoever thou art, O man, who hast the sentence of death in thyself, unto thee said the Lord, not 'Do this, perfectly obey all my commands, and live;' but 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'"*

The doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit has had a vital energy in the whole history of Methodism. It presents an inward test of religious character which every Methodist is enjoined to bear with him at all times; and, as it is always taught that it is accompanied by the "fruits of the Spirit," the doctrine has not been historically productive of those abuses which have been supposed natural to it.

* "I venture to avow it as my conviction, that either Christian faith is what Wesley here describes, or there is no proper meaning in the word." —Coleridge: Note to Southey's Wesley, chap. 20.

Wesley is explicit, as usual, in his definition of this doctrine. "What," he asks, "is *the witness of the Spirit?* The original word μαρτυρία may be rendered either (as it is in several places) *the witness*, or less ambiguously, *the testimony*, or *the record;* so it is rendered in our translation, (1 John v. 11,) 'This is the record,' the testimony, the sum of what God testifies in all the inspired writings, 'that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.' The testimony now under consideration is given by the Spirit of God to and with our spirit. He is the Person testifying. What he testifies to us is, 'that we are the children of God.' The immediate result of this testimony is, 'the fruits of the Spirit,' namely, 'love, joy, peace; long-suffering, gentleness, goodness.' And, without these, the testimony itself cannot continue. For it is inevitably destroyed, not only by the commission of any outward sin, or the omission of known duty, but by giving way to any inward sin; in a word, by whatever grieves the Holy Spirit of God. I observed, many years ago, that it is hard to find words in the language of men to explain the deep things of God. Indeed, there are none that will adequately express what the Spirit of God works in his children. But perhaps one might say, (desiring any who are taught of God to correct, soften, or strengthen the expression,) by the 'testimony of the Spirit,' I mean an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God; that 'Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me;' that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God. After twenty years' further consideration, I see no cause to retract any part of this. Neither do I conceive how any of these expressions may be altered so as to make them more intelligible. I can only add, that if any of the children of God will point out any other expressions which are more clear, or more agreeable to the word of God, I will readily lay these aside. Meantime let it be observed, I do not mean hereby that the Spirit of God testifies this by any outward voice; no, nor always by an inward voice, although he may do this sometimes. Neither do I suppose that he always applies to the heart (though he often may) one or more texts of Scripture. But he so works upon the soul by his immediate influence, and by a strong though inexplicable operation, that the stormy wind and troubled waves subside, and there is a sweet calm; the heart resting as in the arms of Jesus, and the sinner being clearly satisfied that all his 'iniquities are forgiven, and his sins covered.'"

On this subject, as on his other prominent doctrines, Wesley had the concurrence of the general Church. He differed from other theologians chiefly in his attempt to popularize these high truths, and to make them thus bear on his great purpose, the restoration of a general and living piety. He says: "With regard to the assurance of faith, I apprehend that the whole Christian Church in the first centuries enjoyed it. For though we have few points of doctrine explicitly taught in the small remains of the ante-Nicene fathers; yet, I think, none that carefully reads Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Polycarp, Origen, or any other of them, can doubt whether either the writer himself possessed it, or all whom he mentions as real Christians. And I really conceive, both from the '*Harmonia Confessionum*,' and whatever else I have occasionally read, that all the Reformed Churches in Europe did once believe, 'Every true Christian has the Divine evidence of his being in favour with God.'" Again he says: "I know likewise that Luther, Melancthon, and many other (if not all) of the Reformers, frequently and strongly assert, that every believer is conscious of his own acceptance with God; and that by a supernatural evidence." *

The greatest philosophical writer of our age declares that "*Assurance*, personal assurance, special faith, (*the feeling of certainty* that God is propitious to *me*, that *my* sins are forgiven, *fiducia*, *plerophoria fidei*, *fides specialis*,) assurance was long universally held in the Protestant communities to be the criterion and condition of a true or *saving faith*. Luther declares that 'he who hath not assurance spews faith out;' and Melancthon, that 'assurance is the discriminating line of Christianity from heathenism.' Assurance is, indeed, the *punctum saliens* of Luther's system; and an unacquaintance with this, his great central doctrine, is one prime cause of the chronic misrepresentation which runs through our recent histories of Luther and the Reformation. Assurance is no less strenuously maintained by Calvin; is held even by Arminius, and stands essentially part and parcel of all the Confessions of all the Churches of the Reformation down to the Westminster Assembly. In that Synod assurance was, in Protestantism for the *first*, and indeed the *only* time, formally declared '*not to be of the essence of faith*;' and accordingly the Scottish General Assembly has subsequently, once and again, condemned and deposed the holders of this, the doctrine of Luther, of Calvin, of all the other Churches of the Reformation, and of the older Scottish Church itself. In the English, and more particularly in the Irish Establishment, assurance still stands a

* Letters 532, 533, Works, vol. xii.

necessary tenet of ecclesiastical belief.* Assurance was consequently held by all the older Anglican Churchmen, of whom Hooker may stand for the example; but assurance is now openly disavowed without scruple, by Anglican Churchmen, high and low, when apprehended; but of these many are incognizant of the opinion, its import, its history, and even its name." †

It should be remarked, however, that Wesley, with his usual logical acuteness, distinguishes faith itself from assurance;‡ many good men, he contends, have faith, who nevertheless have not assurance, though it is their privilege to have it. He also distinguished the witness of the Spirit from the assurance of final salvation. His Arminianism enabled him to make this practically important distinction. The Calvinistic doctrine of final perseverance necessarily implies the final salvation of all who once receive genuine assurance of present regeneration. The practical liabilities of such an inference Wesley would have deprecated. He taught that the probation of even the perfect Christian still continued, and the possibility of falling, and of falling finally, was a motive for continued watchfulness. In fine, his theological system was throughout homogeneous and symmetrical.§

Such were the characteristic tenets of Methodism. They were the elements of life and power to the movement. Connected with

* See Homilies, book i. number iii. part 3, specially referred to in the eleventh of the Thirty-nine Articles; and number iv. parts 1 and 3; likewise the sixth Lambeth Article.

† Discussions on Philosophy, &c., by Sir William Hamilton, pp. 508, 509, *note*. London, 1853.

‡ See book iii. chap. 5; see also Watson's Wesley, chap. 9.

§ Watson (Life of Wesley, chap. 9) says: "According to Mr. Wesley's views, the order of our passing into a *state* of justification and conscious reconcilement to God, is, 1. True repentance, which, however, gives us no worthiness, and establishes no claim upon pardon, although it so necessarily precedes justifying faith, that all trust even in the merits of Christ for salvation would be presumptuous and unauthorized without repentance; since, as he says, 'Christ is not even to be offered to the careless sinner.' (Sermon on 'The Law established through Faith.') 2. A supernatural *elenchos*, or assured conviction, that 'Christ loved *me*, and *gave* himself for *me*,' in the intention of his death; inciting to and producing full acquiescence with God's method of saving the guilty, and an entire personal trust in Christ's atonement for sin. Of this trust, actual justification is the result; but then follows, 3. The direct testimony of the Holy Spirit, giving assurance in different degrees, in different persons, and often in the same person, that I am a child of God; and, 4. Filial confidence in God. The *elenchos*, the *trust*, the *Spirit's witness*, and the *filial confidence*, he held, were frequently, but not always, so closely united as not to be distinguished as to *time*, though each is, from its *nature*, *successive* and *distinct*."

its Arminian doctrine of universal redemption, already sufficiently stated, they were promulgated and enforced throughout its whole range. They have undergone no essential change in its history; they have been attended with no historical heresy or discord in the Connection, in either the New or the Old World. Wesley gave them such lucid definitions, and they have been so practically potential, that they have produced a singular unanimity of opinion among his followers. They have thrown most of the usual topics of dogmatic controversy into abeyance, and for more than a hundred years have preserved Methodism from any important eruption of heresy, or any serious doctrinal controversy. They are the staple subjects of its biographies, (more numerous, perhaps, than in any other part of the modern Church,) of its psalmody, and of most of its other literature; of its pulpit discourses, of its classes, love-feasts, and prayer-meetings, and of the colloquial inquiries and discussions of its people; and, however its success may be attributed to its practical system, it cannot be doubted that the effectiveness of that system itself is attributable chiefly to these great truths which underlie and sustain it.

It is unnecessary to treat here of the other doctrines of Christianity which Methodism holds in common with the Protestant world. In forming a Liturgy for his American societies, Wesley threw aside all formal "creeds" except that called the Apostles', but he hesitated not to repeat the others in the public service of the Church of England.

It has been justly said that upon points which have not been revealed, he formed opinions for himself which were generally clear, consistent with the Christian system, and "creditable for the most part both to his feelings and his judgment; but he laid no stress upon them, and never proposed them for more than they were worth." *

His views of the brute creation were creditable to his heart if not to his reason. He believed in their original immortality, and that death ensued to them from the disorder introduced into the natural world by the fall of man, an opinion which he would have modified had geological discoveries advanced in his day as in ours. "What," he asks, "is the barrier between men and brutes—the line which they cannot pass? It is not reason. Set aside that ambiguous term; exchange it for the plain word, understanding, and who can deny that brutes have this? We may as well deny that they have sight or hearing. But it is this: man is capable of

* Southey's Life of Wesley, chap. 20.

God; the inferior creatures are not. We have no ground to believe that they are in any degree capable of knowing, loving, or obeying God. This is the specific difference between man and brute; the great gulf which they cannot pass over. And as a loving obedience to God was the perfection of man, so a loving obedience to man was the perfection of brutes. And as long as they continued in this they were happy after their kind; happy in the right state and the right use of their respective faculties. Yea, and so long they had some shadowy resemblance of even moral goodness; for they had gratitude to man for benefits received, and a reverence for him. They had likewise a kind of benevolence to each other, unmixed with any contrary temper. How beautiful many of them were, we may conjecture from that which still remains; and that not only in the noblest creatures, but in those of the lowest order. And they were all surrounded, not only with plenteous food, but with every thing that could give them pleasure; pleasure unmixed with pain; for pain was not yet; it had not entered into paradise. And they, too, were immortal: for 'God made not death; neither hath he pleasure in the death of any living.'" *

But "as all the blessings of God in paradise flowed through man to the inferior creatures; as man was the great channel of communication between the Creator and the whole brute creation; so when man made himself incapable of transmitting those blessings, that communication was necessarily cut off. The intercourse between God and the inferior creatures being stopped, those blessings could no longer flow in upon them. And then it was that 'the creature,' every creature, 'was subjected to vanity,' to sorrow; to pain of every kind, to all manner of evils; not, indeed, 'willingly,' not by its own choice, not by any act or deed of its own, but 'by reason of Him that subjected it,' by the wise permission of God, determining to draw eternal good out of this temporary evil."

"But," he asks, "will 'the creature,' will even the brute creation always remain in this deplorable condition? God forbid that we should affirm this; yea, or even entertain such a thought! While 'the whole creation groaneth together,' (whether men attend or not,) their groans are not dispersed in idle air, but enter into the ears of Him that made them. While his creatures 'travail together in pain,' he knoweth all their pain, and is bringing them nearer and nearer to the birth, which shall be accomplished in its season. He seeth 'the earnest expectation' wherewith the whole animated creation 'waiteth for' that final 'manifestation of the sons of God;'

* Sermon on "The General Deliverance," Works, vol. vi.

in which 'they themselves also shall be delivered [not by annihilation ; annihilation is not deliverance] from the 'present' bondage of corruption, into 'a measure of' the glorious liberty of the children of God.' Nothing can be more express ; away with vulgar prejudices, and let the plain word of God take place. They shall be delivered from 'the bondage of corruption into glorious liberty ;' even a measure, according as they are capable, of 'the liberty of the children of God.'"

"May I be permitted," he adds, "to mention here a conjecture concerning a brute creation? What if it should then please the all-wise, the all-gracious Creator, to raise them higher in the scale of beings? What if it should please Him, when he makes us 'equal to angels,' to make them what we are now—creatures capable of God ; capable of knowing, and loving, and enjoying the author of their being?"

Wesley believed that there was a regular gradation of creation from the animalcule to the archangel ; "an opinion," says Southey, "confirmed by science as far as our physiological knowledge extends." * He also thought it probable, that each class in the series advances, and will for ever advance, men taking the rank of angels, and brutes the rank of men, and eternal progress and felicity be thus the lot of all saved beings ; an opinion for which we find no analogy in our later paleontological discoveries, for though they demonstrate the serial superiority of the organic creation, we have ascertained no transmutation of species.

Wesley believed that beings less bound than we, by material or local trammels, often intervene in our sphere, and may have relations of unsuspected intimacy with us. "Certainly," he said, "it is as easy for a spirit to speak to our hearts as for a man to speak to our ears." Evil spirits not only suggest evil thoughts to man, but sometimes inflict physical calamities, as in the days of Christ. "Deliver us from evil," in the Lord's Prayer, means in the Greek the "Evil One." Good spirits, or angels, minister not only to the souls, but to the external welfare of men. "May they not," he asks, "minister also to us, with respect to our bodies, in a thousand ways which we do not now understand? They may prevent our falling into many dangers which we are not sensible of, and may deliver us out of many others, though we know not whence our deliverance comes. How many times have we been strangely and unaccountably preserved in sudden and dangerous falls! And it is well if we did not impute that preservation to chance, or to our

* Southey's Wesley, chap. 20.

own wisdom or strength. Not so: it was God who gave his angels charge over us, and in their hands they bore us up. Indeed, men of the world will always impute such deliverances to accident or second causes. To these, possibly, some of them might have imputed Daniel's preservation in the lion's den. But himself ascribes it to the true cause: 'My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths,' Dan. vi. 22."

In a letter to one of his correspondents he says: "It has in all ages been allowed that the communion of saints extends to those in paradise as well as those upon earth, as they are all one body united under one head. But it is difficult to say either what kind or what degree of union may be between them. It is not improbable their fellowship with us is far more sensible than ours with them. Suppose any of them are present, they are hid from our eyes, but we are not hid from their sight. They, no doubt, clearly discern all our words and actions, if not all our thoughts too. For it is hard to think that these walls of flesh and blood can intercept the view of an angelic being. But we have, in general, only a faint and indistinct perception of their presence, unless in some peculiar instances where it may answer some gracious ends of Divine providence." *

He has given us two sermons on this subject; if they betray some questionable theories, they are nevertheless admirable illustrations of the elevated and trustful temper of his heart. †

A curious subject, already alluded to, but postponed for further consideration, may be here appropriately recalled, as related to Wesley's views of preternatural agency in our world.‡ He believed that the marvellous physical effects which often attended the religious excitement of his times were supernatural; he seems, however, to have had no decided opinion as to their moral character. His allusions to them are contradictory. After a thorough examination of cases at Newcastle, he concluded, as has been shown, that they were demoniacal—a diabolical interference with the work of the Holy Spirit. It was Satan "tearing" the awakened "as they were coming to Christ." This was in 1743; but nearly forty years later (in 1781) he appears to have modified his opinion: he still believed they were preternatural, but supposed they were sometimes from good, at others from evil powers. "Satan," he says, "*mimicked* this part of the work of God, in order to discredit the whole; and

* Letter 688, Works, vol. xiii.
† Sermons 71 and 72, on Good and Bad Angels. ‡ See pp. 90, 137.

yet it is not well to give up this part any more than to give up the whole."* The marvels under the ministrations of Berridge, at Everton, he believed were "at first wholly from God;" such effects, he adds, "are partly so at this day; he will enable us to discern how far, in every case, the work is pure, how far mixed." It should be borne in mind, however, that Wesley never confounded these phenomena with noise or clamour in public worship; the latter he unhesitatingly condemned. "Perhaps," he says, in one of his discourses,† "some may be afraid, lest the refraining from these warm expressions, or even gently checking them, should check the fervour of our devotion. It is very possible it may check, or even prevent, some kind of fervour which has passed for devotion. Possibly it may prevent loud shouting, horrid, unnatural screaming, repeating the same words twenty or thirty times, jumping two or three feet high, and throwing about the arms or legs, both of men and women, in a manner shocking not only to religion, but to common decency; but it will never check, much less prevent, true Scriptural devotion."

History attests four facts respecting the physical phenomena of religious excitements.

First: That they have not been peculiar to Methodism. They occurred in the medieval Roman Church. They were not uncommon, before Wesley's day, in Scotland. Edwards has recorded them abundantly in his accounts of the great awakening in New England. Whitefield found that they were known in New Jersey before his arrival. The most remarkable instances have occurred among the Presbyterians in the American western states. The extraordinary scenes called the "jerks" began at one of their camp-meetings; they were rapid, jerking contortions, which seemed always to be the effect, direct or indirect, of religious causes, yet affected not only the religious, but often the most irreligious minds. Violent opposers were sometimes seized by them; men with imprecations

* Short History of the Methodists, Works, vol. xiii.

† Sermon on "Knowing Christ after the Flesh." Adam Clarke equally condemned such clamours. In his commentary on 1 Cor. xiv. 33, he says: "Let not the persons who act in the congregation in this disorderly manner, say that they are under the influence of God; for he is not the author of confusion; but two, three, or more, praying or teaching at the same place, at the same time, is confusion; and God is not the author of such work; and let men beware how they attribute such disorder to the God of order and peace. The Apostle calls such conduct *akatastasia*—tumult, sedition; and such it is in the sight of God, and in the sight of all good men. How often is a work of God marred and discredited by the folly of men!"

upon their lips were suddenly smitten with them. Drunkards, attempting to drown the effect by liquors, could not hold the bottle to their lips; their convulsed arms would drop it, or shiver it against the surrounding trees. Horsemen, charging in upon camp-meetings to disperse them, were arrested by the strange affection at the very boundaries of the worshipping circles, and were the more violently shaken the more they endeavoured to resist the inexplicable power. "If they would not strive against it, but pray in good earnest, the jerking would usually abate," says a witness who has seen more than five hundred persons "jerking" at one time in his large congregations.* The nervous infection spread from one denomination to another, and prevailed as an endemic, if not as an epidemic.

Second: They were seldom or never followed by any morbid physical effects. They were sometimes prolonged enough to produce serious consequences, had they been the result of morbid causes. In the western American cases men, but oftener women, of apparently sound health, would lie motionless and insensible for not only a day, but sometimes during a week, without food or drink, and, on returning to consciousness, show no important physical derangement.† The most violent convulsions left little or no exhaustion.

Third: They have not yet been identified with any known diseased affections. They are a class by themselves, and appear inseparable from some personal or public *religious* cause. If not morbid

* Autobiography of Peter Cartwright: "To see those proud young gentlemen and young ladies, dressed in their silks, jewelry, and prunella, from top to toe, take the jerks, would often excite my risibilities. At the first jerk or so, you would see their fine bonnets, caps, and combs fly; and so sudden would be the jerking of the head that their long loose hair would crack almost as loud as a waggoner's whip." See also "Autobiography of a Pioneer," (Rev. Jacob Young;) and the "Rifle, Axe, and Saddlebags," by Rev. W. H. Milburn.

† Cartwright mentions one fatal case of the "jerks," but it was not from any physiological effect. "This large man cursed the jerks and all religion. Shortly afterward he took the jerks and started to run, but he jerked so powerfully he could not get away. He halted among some saplings, and, although he was violently agitated, he took out his bottle of whisky, and swore he would drink the jerks to death; but he jerked at such a rate that he could not get the bottle to his mouth, though he tried hard. At length he fetched a sudden jerk, and the bottle struck a sapling and was broken to pieces, and spilled his whisky on the ground. He became very much enraged, and cursed and swore very profanely, his jerks still increasing. At length he fetched a very violent jerk, snapped his neck, fell, and soon expired, with his mouth full of cursing and bitterness."

they are certainly abnormal; but their symptoms are not identical with any other nervous affection in our recognized nosology.

Fourth: Though peculiar to religious causes, direct or indirect, they are in themselves physical affections. The most devout men have not been the most subject to them. They have not invariably been followed by moral results. They have attended the worst as well as the best forms of religions—fanatical heresies as well as orthodox teachings. We are indebted to a Methodist authority for our best solution of them. He defines them as "religious catalepsy,"* a suspension more or less of the functions of the cerebrum, attended by an abnormal activity of those of the cerebellum. The rational powers—the will, judgment or reason—are thus temporarily put in abeyance, and the involuntary susceptibilities left subject to the prevailing impression or influence. "To be thrown," he says, "into the cataleptic state in conversion, is no criterion of the genuineness of that change. The proof must be sought, and will be found, elsewhere. Religious catalepsy is not a safe standard by which to estimate a religious state, growth in grace, or personal piety in any stage of experience. Because the same amount of divine influence shed upon a person under one class of circumstances which would result in catalepsy, would, to another person in the same circumstances, and to the same person in other circumstances, be followed by no such result."

The progress of science will yet, doubtless, throw conclusive light on this difficult question; meanwhile the judicious advice heretofore quoted from a high Methodist authority† is approved by Methodists generally: that in no such cases should the occasional occurrence of noise and disorder be taken as a proof that an extraordinary work of grace is not being wrought in the hearts of men by the Spirit of God; that as far as possible they are to be repressed by a firm discipline, "for the power of the work does not lie in them;" and yet that discipline, though firm, should be discriminating, for the sake of the real blessing which at such seasons may be attending the administration of the truth.

In accordance with Wesley's opinion respecting preternatural agencies in our world, were his views of Providence. The fact of a superintending Providence he held to be essential to the government of the world by a personal God. He discarded the usual distinctions between a general and special providence. "Admitting," he says,

* Religious Catalepsy, by Rev. Silas Comfort, in Methodist Quarterly Review for April, 1859.

† Richard Watson. See p. 92 of this work.

"that in the common course of nature God does act by general laws, he has never precluded himself from making exceptions to them whensoever he pleases, either by suspending that law in favour of those that love him, or by employing his mighty angels: by either of which means he can deliver out of all danger them that trust in him. 'What! you expect miracles, then?' Certainly I do, if I believe the Bible; for the Bible teaches me that God hears and answers prayer; but every answer to prayer is, properly, a miracle. For if natural causes take their course, if things go on in their natural way, it is no answer at all. . . . You say, 'You allow a general providence, but deny a particular one.' And what is a general, of whatever kind it be, that includes no particulars? Is not every general necessarily made up of its several particulars? Can you instance any general that is not? Tell me any genus, if you can, that contains no species? What is it that constitutes a genus but so many species added together? What, I pray, is a whole that contains no parts? Mere nonsense and contradiction! Every whole must, in the nature of things, be made up of its several parts; insomuch that if there be no parts there can be no whole. . . . Nay, rather say, 'The Lord is loving to every man,' and his care 'is over all his works.' . . . Nothing is small in his sight that in any degree affects the welfare of any that fear God and work righteousness. What becomes, then, of your general providence, exclusive of a particular? Let it be for ever rejected by all rational men as absurd, self-contradictory nonsense." *

* Sermon 67, on "Divine Providence," Works, vol. vi.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL ECONOMY OF METHODISM.

Providential Character of Methodism—Its Disciplinary System—Its gradual Development—Its importance to New Countries—Its Success in the New World—Coincidence of the Rise of Methodism with the Origin of the Republic of the United States—Heroic Character of the early Methodist Preachers.

It is impossible to estimate the Methodistic movement aright, from either a Christian or a philosophic standpoint, without recognizing in it that directing Providence which has hitherto been so often and so strikingly revealed in our narrative. Methodism forms an extraordinary chapter in the history of Providence, and its disciplinary system is one of the most remarkable passages in that chapter. Time has proved its system to be the most efficient of all modern religious organizations, not only among the dispersed population of a new country, but also in the dense communities of an ancient people; on the American frontier, and in the English city, it is found efficacious beyond all other plans, stimulating most others, and yet outstripping them.

This singular system of religious instrumentalities was not devised. It was in but few respects the result of sagacious foresight: it grew up spontaneously, and Wesley's legislative wisdom shows itself not so much in inventing its peculiarities, as in appropriating skilfully the means which were providentially provided for him. Its elementary parts were evolved unexpectedly in the progress of the denomination. Wesley saw that the state of religion throughout the English nation required a thorough reform; God, he believed, would provide for whatever was necessary to be done in such a necessity, if willing and earnest men would attempt to do it. He was ready to attempt it, and to be sacrificed for it. He looked not into the future, but consulted only the openings of his present duty.

He expected at first to keep within the restrictions of the national Church. The manner in which he was providentially led to adopt, one by one, the peculiar measures which at last consolidated into a distinct and unparalleled system, is an interesting feature in the

history of Methodism, and worthy to be traced with more particular attention than we have hitherto been able to give it.

The doctrines which he preached, and the novel emphasis with which he preached them, led to his expulsion from the pulpits of the Establishment. This treatment, together with the great assemblies he attracted, compelled him to proclaim them *in the open air*—a measure which the moral wants of the country demanded, and which is justified, as well by the example of Christ as by its unquestionable results.

The inconvenience of the "rooms" occupied by his followers for spiritual meetings at Bristol, led to the erection of a more commodious edifice. This was a place of occasional preaching, then of regular worship, and finally, without the slightest anticipation of such a result, the first in *a series of chapels* which became the habitual resort of his followers, and thereby contributed more, perhaps, than any other cause to their organization into a distinct sect.

The debt incurred by this building rendered necessary *a plan of pecuniary contribution* among the worshippers who assembled in it. They agreed to pay a penny a-week. They were divided into companies of twelve, one of whom, called the leader, was appointed to receive their pittances. At their weekly meetings for the payment of this contribution, they found leisure for religious conversation and prayer. These companies, formed only for a local and temporary object, were afterward called *classes*, and the arrangement was incorporated into the permanent economy of Methodism. In this manner originated one of the most distinctive features of its system—the advantages of which are beyond estimation. The class-meeting has, more than any other means, preserved the original purity and vigour of Methodism. It is the best school of experimental divinity the world has seen in modern times. It has given a sociality of spirit and a disciplinary training to Methodism which are surpassed in no other religious communion.

We cannot but admire the providential adaptation of this institution to another which was subsequently to become all-important in the Methodist economy—an *itinerant ministry*. Such a ministry could not admit of much local pastoral labour, especially in the New World, where the circuits were long. The class-leader became a substitute for the preacher in this department of his office. The fruits of an itinerant ministry must have disappeared in many, perhaps most places, during the long intervals which elapsed between the visits of the earlier preachers, had they not been preserved by the

class-meeting. A small class has been the nucleus of almost every Church which Methodism has formed.

Another most important result of the class-meeting was the pecuniary provision it afforded for the prosecution of the plans which were daily enlarging under the hands of Wesley. The whole *fiscal system* of Methodism arose from the Bristol penny collections, modified at last into the "rule" of "a penny a-week and a shilling a-quarter." Thus, without foreseeing the great independent cause he was about to establish, Wesley formed, through a slight circumstance, a simple and yet most effective system of finance for the expenses which its future prosecution would involve. And admirably was this pecuniary system adapted to the circumstances of that cause. He was destined to raise up a great religious organization: it was to be composed chiefly of the poor, and yet to require large pecuniary resources. How were these resources to be provided among a poor people? The providential formation of a plan of finance which suited the poverty of the poorest, and which worldly sagacity would have contemned, banished all difficulty, and has led to pecuniary results which have rarely if ever been equalled by any voluntary religious organization.

The itinerant lay ministry was equally providential in its origin. Wesley was at first opposed, as we have seen, to the employment of lay preachers.* He expected the co-operation of the regular clergy. They, however, were his most persistent antagonists. Meanwhile the small societies formed by his followers for spiritual improvement multiplied. "What," he says, "was to be done in a case of such extreme necessity, where so many souls lay at stake? No clergyman would assist at all. The expedient that remained was to seek some one among themselves who was upright of heart and of sound judgment in the things of God, and to desire him to meet the rest as often as he could, to confirm them, as he was able, in the ways of God, either by reading to them or by prayer or exhortation." From exhortation these men proceeded to exposition, from exposition to preaching. The result was natural, but it was not designed. Such was the origin of the Methodist *lay ministry*.

The multiplication of societies exceeded the increase of preachers. It thus became necessary that the latter should travel from town to town, and thence arose the *itinerancy*, one of the most important features of the ministerial system of Methodism. It is not a labour-saving provision—quite the contrary—but a labourer-saving one. The pastoral service, which would otherwise have been confined to

* See book ii. chapter 5.

a single parish, was extended by this plan to scores of towns and villages, and, by the co-operation of the class-meeting, was rendered almost as efficient as it would have been were it local. It was this peculiarity that rendered the ministry of Methodism so successful in new countries. It also contributed, perhaps more than any other cause, to maintain a sentiment of unity among its people. It gave a pilgrim, a militant character to its preachers; they felt that "here they had no abiding city," and were led more earnestly to seek one out of sight. It would not allow them to entangle themselves with local trammels. The cross peculiarly "crucified them to the world, and the world to them." Their zeal, rising into religious chivalry; their devotion to one work; their disregard for ease and the conveniences of stationary life, were owing largely to their itinerancy. It made them one of the most self-sacrificing, laborious, practical, and successful bodies of men which has appeared in the great field of modern Christian labour. And it was the opinion of Wesley that the time when itinerancy should cease in the ministry, and classes among the laity of Methodism, would be the date of its downfall.

These developments of the movement inevitably led to others. It was necessary that Wesley should advise his preachers; they met him annually for the purpose, and from such informal conferences arose the constitutional *Conference*—a body whose title has taken a prominent place in the ecclesiastical terminology of Christendom, among the names of councils, convocations, and synods. Its consultations at last originated the laws, defined the theology, and planned the propagandism of the denomination. Its minutes, revised and reduced, became the *Methodist Discipline*.* It has reproduced itself in Ireland, in France and Germany, in the American Republic, in the British North American Provinces, in Australia, and in Africa; and it promises to be a perpetually, if not universally, recognized institution of the Protestant world.

With the erection of chapels arose the necessity of the appointment of *Trustees*, to hold their property. The finances of the societies rendered necessary the appointment of local *Stewards;* the multiplication of societies, the appointment of *Circuit Stewards*, to whom the local stewards became auxiliaries. The increase of business on the circuits led to the creation of the *Quarterly Meeting*,

* The "Large Minutes" was a compilation, made by Wesley, of the most important provisions of his Annual Conferences from 1744 to 1789. See this important tract in his Works, vol. viii.; [also the various editions compared in the Minutes of Conference, vol. i. 8vo. New Edition, 1862.]

or Quarterly Conference as it is called in America, comprising the officers, lay and clerical, of the several societies of the circuit; and the *District Meeting* or Conference, combining several circuits. And thus, wheel within wheel, the system took form, and became a settled and powerful economy.

The importance of this system becomes still more striking when we consider its adaptation to the New World—to the immense fields of immigration and civilization which were about to be opened in not only North America, but in Australasia, the "Island World," to which geographers give rank as the fifth division of the globe, and along whose now busy coasts Cook, the navigator, was furtively sailing while Wesley was founding Methodism in England.

It is a fact worthy of remark, that while the moral revolution of Methodism was going on in the Old World, the most important political revolution of modern times was in process in the New; and when we contemplate the new modes of religious activity which were evolved by the former, we cannot resist the conviction that there was a providential relation between the two events—that they were not only coincident in time, but also in purpose. While Wesley and his co-labourers were reviving Christianity in England, Washington and his compatriots were reviving popular government in America. It was the American Revolution that led to the development of the resources of the continent, and rendered it the assembling place of the nations; and Methodism commenced its operations sufficiently early to be in effective vigour by the time that the great movement of the civilized world toward the West had fully begun. In how many respects was it adapted to this emergency of the country! If we may judge from the result, it was raised up by Providence more in reference to the New than to the Old World. Its peculiar measures were especially suited to the circumstances of the former, while those of nearly every other contemporary sect lacked the necessary adaptation. Its zealous spirit readily blended with the buoyant sympathies of a youthful nation flushed with the sense of liberty. The usual process of a long preparatory training for the ministry, could not consist with the rapidly increasing wants of the country. Methodism called into existence a ministry less trained, but not less efficient; possessing in a surprising degree that sterling good sense and manly energy, examples of which great exigences always produce among the common people. These it imbued with its own energetic spirit, and formed them to a standard of character altogether unique in the annals of the modern Christian ministry. They composed a class which,

perhaps, will never be seen again. They were distinguished by native mental vigour, shrewdness, extraordinary knowledge of human nature, many of them by overwhelming natural eloquence, the effects of which on popular assemblies are scarcely paralleled in the history of ancient or modern oratory, and not a few by powers of satire and wit, which made the gainsayer cower before them. To these intellectual attributes they added great excellences of the heart, a zeal which only burned more fervently where that of ordinary men would have grown faint, a courage that exulted in perils, a generosity which knew no bounds, and left most of them in want in their latter days, a forbearance and co-operation with each other which are seldom found in large bodies, an entire devotion to one work, and, withal, a simplicity of character which extended even to their manners and their apparel. They were likewise characterized by rare physical abilities. They were mostly robust. The feats of labour and endurance which they performed in incessantly preaching in villages and cities, among slave huts and Indian wigwams; in journeyings, seldom interrupted by stress of weather; in fording creeks, swimming rivers, sleeping in forests; these, with the novel circumstances with which such a career frequently brought them into contact, afford examples of life and character which, in the hands of genius, might be the materials for a new department of romantic literature. They were men who laboured as if the judgment fires were about to break out on the world, and time to end with their day. They were precisely the men whom the moral wants of the New World at the time demanded.

The usual plan of local labour, limited to a single congregation or to a parish, was inadequate to the wants of Great Britain at this time, but much more so to those of the New World. The extraordinary scheme of an itinerant ministry met, in the only manner possible, the circumstances of the latter; and the men described were the only characters who could have sustained that scheme amid the hardships of American life. It would not be difficult to estimate what must have been the probable result of that rapid advancement which the population of the United States was making beyond the customary provisions for religious instruction, had not this novel plan met the emergency. Much of what was then its frontier, but has since become the most important states of the Confederacy, would have passed through the forming period of its character without the influence of Christian institutions. But the Methodist itinerancy has borne the cross, not only in the midst, but in the van of the hosts of emigration. That impersona-

tion of hardship, disinterestedness, and romantic adventure, the circuit preacher, was found with his horse and saddle-bags threading the trail of the savage, and cheering and blessing with his visits the loneliest cottage of the farthest West. The Methodist evangelists went as pioneers to the aboriginal tribes, and gathered into the pale of the Church more of the children of the forest than any other sect; they scaled the Rocky Mountains, and were laying the foundations of Christianity and civilization on the shores of the Columbia, even before the movement of emigration tended toward them; they have been hastening down toward the capital of Montezuma, while, throughout the length and breadth of the older states, they have spread a healthful religious influence which has affected all classes, so that their cause includes not only a larger aggregate population than any other religious body of the country, but especially a larger proportion of those classes whose moral elevation is the most difficult and the most important—the savage, the slave, the free negro, and the lower classes generally.

In no part of the earth has the practical system of Methodism taken a more thorough organization, or showed more vigour, than amid the moral exigencies of the New World. Its General Conferences occurring once in four years, its Annual Conferences once a-year, its Quarterly Conferences once in three months, its Leaders' Meetings once a-month, its Class-meetings once a-week, form a series of gradations extending from a week to four years, and covering all the successive intervals. To these correspond also its gradations of labour: Bishops traversing the continent; Presiding Elders travelling districts; Circuit and Stationed Preachers occupying less extensive fields, assisted by Local Preachers and Exhorters; and finally, Leaders inspecting, weekly, divisions of the local societies. This exact machinery is a chief cause of the energy and permanence of so diffuse and varied a system. And is it presumption to believe it providential that such a system was produced at such a time?

Such, then, is a general, or what may more properly be called a genetic view of the practical system of Methodism. A more definitive description of its individual parts, and of some of its adjunct usages and institutions, cannot fail to interest the student of ecclesiastical history.

CHAPTER III.

THE UNITED SOCIETY—CATHOLICITY OF METHODISM.

Origin of the United Society—The "General Rules"—They contain no Dogmatic Term of Membership—Did Wesley approve of Creeds?—Indicatory and Obligatory Creeds?—Wesley used the Words Society and Church as convertible Terms—His Idea of a True Church—He qualifies the Definition given in the Anglican Articles—His definition of the "One Faith"—His gradual Organization of Methodism gave it the Form of a Church without changing the Terms of Communion—Theology as recognized in Wesley's Legal Deeds—Required as a Functional Qualification in the Ministry, but not as a Condition of Communion—Did he change the Terms of Membership in the American Societies by giving them Articles of Religion?

The first organized form of Methodism, according to Wesley himself, was the *United Society*, established in connection with the Foundry, in London, in the latter end of the year 1739.* It consisted, at its first meeting, of twelve persons; of forty at the second; and soon after of one hundred. It became the Methodist Church.

The basis of its organization was subsequently defined in "The General Rules," prepared by John and Charles Wesley.† These rules are the recognized terms of membership throughout the Methodist communion. They declare that no other "condition" than that which is therein defined "is previously required of those who desire admission to these Societies." They have already been stated in detail; they are remarkable as containing not a single dogmatic condition of communion.

A fact so extraordinary is well worthy of consideration, not merely as an example of the evangelical liberality of Wesley, but as an illustration of his views of Christian fellowship.

Was he opposed to creeds? Certainly not, as convenient summaries of theology; nor as indicatory standards of belief in religious communions. He could not have doubted that they had been bulwarks to the faith in critical periods of the Church. But if he could approve them as *indicatory* standards of truth, did he also approve them as *obligatory* standards? Has he left Methodism to the world without an obligatory dogmatic platform, so far as its

* See book ii. chap. 1, and Jackson's Charles Wesley, chap. 7.

† See them in book ii. chap. 5.

terms of communion are concerned?—differing thus, not only from almost every other important prior or contemporaneous body in ecclesiastical history, but also anticipating, perilously or beneficially that basis for a future Protestant catholicity which not a few commanding minds, either from a higher than ordinary ideal of Christianity, or from a questionable liberalism, have asserted to be one of the capital wants of modern Protestantism?

On a question of such grave importance in the estimation of many good men, and on which Wesley's example would be liable to so much abuse by rationalistic liberalists on the one hand, and fastidious dogmatists on the other, it is befitting that the historian should speak with caution, if not with diffidence. But it is obvious enough that Wesley did not make theological opinions a condition of membership in his own society. This is manifest, not only in his "General Rules," but by assertions and facts, of continual recurrence in the preceding pages. But do we herein have his opinion of what should be the ground or right of membership in a properly constituted Christian Church? It is often remarked that he formed societies, not churches. The assertion is in one sense historically correct; but the inferences usually drawn from it are illogical, and would not have been admitted by Wesley himself. He did not at first believe it was God's design, in raising up the Methodists, that they should form a new sect; he did not like that term, and he wished not his people to stand isolated from other Christian bodies; but he followed the openings of Providence in giving them the provisions and forms which he saw were gradually consolidating them into a distinct body. He wished them not to call themselves "the Church," as arrogating to themselves an uncharitable distinction, and unnecessarily placing themselves apart from existing Churches; but in his Conference of 1749, when defining a plan for the more intimate combination of his societies, and their closer relation to that of London, he himself calls them "Churches." "May not that in London, the mother church, consult for the good of all the Churches?" * "I still aver," he says, in his eighty-sixth year, after he had given a Constitution and Ordination to his cause, "I still aver, I have never read or heard of, either in ancient or modern history, any *other* Church which builds on so broad a foundation as the Methodists do; which requires of its members no conformity, either in opinion or modes of worship, but barely this one thing—to fear God and work righteousness." † In thus contrasting his Society with "other" Churches,

* Minutes of Conferences, vol. 1. p. 39. † Journal, Aug. 26, 1789.

he certainly assumes that it was itself a Church. He wished not his preachers to be called "ministers," any more than he wished his American *episcopoi* to be called bishops; but he unquestionably made the former ministers, and the latter bishops, by his ordinations, by which the former were authorized to administer the sacraments, and the latter to provide men to administer them.

A question preliminary to the present inquiry is, What did he consider a true Church? He has answered that question with precision: "What do you mean by the church? A visible Church (as our Article defines it) is a company of faithful or believing people; *cœtus credentium*. This is the essence of a Church; and the properties thereof are, (as they are described in the words that follow,) 'among whom the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered.'" *

He has left us an important sermon on "The Church," and another on "Schism."† "How much," he says in the former, "do we almost continually hear about the Church! With many it is matter of daily conversation. And yet how few understand what they talk of; how few know what the term means! A more ambiguous word than this, the *Church*, is scarce to be found in the English language. It is sometimes taken for a building set apart for public worship; sometimes for a congregation or body of people united together in the service of God. It is only in the latter sense that it is taken in the ensuing discourse. It may be taken indifferently for any number of people, how small or great soever. As, 'where two or three are met together in His name,' there is Christ; so, (to speak with St. Cyprian,) 'where two or three believers are met together, there is a Church.' Thus it is that St. Paul, writing to Philemon, mentions 'the Church which was in his house,' plainly signifying that even a Christian family may be termed a Church. Several of those whom God hath called out of the world, (so the original word properly signifies,) uniting together in one congregation, formed a larger Church; as the Church at Jerusalem; that is, all those in Jerusalem whom God had so called."

And, again, he says: "Here, then, is a clear, unexceptionable answer to that question, What is the Church? The catholic or universal Church is all the persons in the universe whom God hath so called out of the world as to entitle them to the preceding character; as to be 'one body,' united by 'one Spirit;' having 'one faith, one hope, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in them all.' That part of this great body

* Earnest Appeal, &c., Works, vol. viii. † Sermons 74 and 75.

of the universal Church which inhabits any one kingdom or nation, we may properly term a National Church; as, the Church of France, the Church of England, the Church of Scotland. A smaller part of the universal Church are the Christians that inhabit one city or town; as the Church of Ephesus, and the rest of the seven Churches mentioned in the Revelation. Two or three Christian believers united together, are a Church in the narrowest sense of the word. Such was the Church in the house of Philemon, and that in the house of Nymphas, mentioned Col. iv. 15. *A particular Church may, therefore, consist of any number of members, whether two or three, or two or three millions.* But still, whether they be larger or smaller, the same idea is to be preserved. They are one body; and have one Spirit, one Lord, one hope, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all."

According to this definition, Wesley must have considered his own congregations or societies as real Churches. If "two or three Christian believers united together are a Church;" if "several of those whom God hath called out of the world, uniting together in one congregation, formed a larger Church;" if "a particular Church may consist of any number of members, whether two or three, or two or three millions," what were his societies but Churches?

In his sermon on "Schism" he accordingly uses interchangeably the terms "Church" and "Society," as he had in the Minutes of his Conference. After defining schism as scripturally meaning divisions in a Church, but popularly meaning secession from it, he admonishes his people against the latter as well as the former, as a sin against God. "Suppose," he says, "the Church or society to which I am now united does not require me to do any thing which the Scripture forbids, or to omit any thing which the Scripture enjoins, it is then my indispensable duty to continue therein. And if I separate from it without any such necessity, I am justly chargeable (whether I foresaw them or not) with all the evils consequent upon that separation. I have spoken the more explicitly upon this head because it is so little understood; because so many of those who profess much religion, nay, and really enjoy a measure of it, have not the least conception of this matter, neither imagine such a separation to be any sin at all. They leave a Christian society with as much unconcern as they go out of one room into another. . . . Do not rashly tear asunder the sacred ties which unite you to any Christian society. This indeed is not of so much consequence to you who are only a nominal Christian, for you are not now vitally united to any of the members of Christ. Though you are called a Christian,

you are not really a member of any Christian Church. But if you are a living member, if you live the life that is hid with Christ in God, then take care how you rend the body of Christ, by separating from your brethren. . . . O beware, I will not say of *forming*, but of *countenancing* or *abetting* any *parties* in a Christian society! Never encourage, much less cause, either by word or action, any division therein. . . . . Happy is he that attains the character of a peace-maker in the Church of God. Why should not you labour after this? Be not content not to stir up strife; but do all that in you lies to prevent or quench the very first spark of it."

Obviously, then, Wesley, in forming societies within the Establishment, must have considered himself as forming spiritual Churches within the national Church. In his sermon on "The Church" he expressly distinguishes national Churches from congregational or spiritual Churches. He adhered to the national Church as a constitutional institution of his country, but recognized all combinations of good men for the service of God, whether within or without the Establishment, as Scriptural Churches. He dissents from the strict definition of a Church given in the nineteenth Article of the Establishment. He says: "But the definition of a Church, laid down in the Article, includes not only this, but much more by that remarkable addition: 'In which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered.' According to this definition, those congregations in which the pure word of God (a strong expression) is not preached, are no parts either of the Church of England or the Church catholic; as neither are those in which the sacraments are not duly administered. I will not undertake to defend the accuracy of this definition. I dare not exclude from the Church catholic all those congregations in which any unscriptural doctrines, which cannot be affirmed to be 'the pure word of God,' are sometimes, yea, frequently preached; neither all those congregations in which the sacraments are not 'duly administered.' Certainly if these things are so, the Church of Rome is not so much as a part of the Catholic Church: seeing therein neither is 'the pure word of God' preached, nor the sacraments 'duly administered.' Whoever they are that have 'one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of all,' I can easily bear with their holding wrong opinions, yea, and superstitious modes of worship; nor would I, on these accounts, scruple still to include them within the pale of the Catholic Church; neither would I have any objection to receive them, if they desired it, as members of the Church of England."

Such was the brave, truth-loving spirit of John Wesley—arrayed in the robes of the Church of England, defending that Church at every point he could, yet magnanimously asserting the claims of truth and charity whenever its Articles compromised them! It is a blessing to the world that such a man must live and speak for ever in its history.

But it may be asked, Does he not here require dogmatic opinions? does he not acknowledge "one faith" to be essential to the Church? He answers for himself in his sermon on "The Church:" "'There is one faith,' which is the free gift of God, and is the ground of their hope. This is not barely the faith of a heathen; namely, a belief that 'there is a God,' and that he is gracious and just, and consequently 'a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' Neither is it barely the faith of a devil; though this goes much farther than the former: for the devil believes, and cannot but believe, all that is written both in the Old and New Testament to be true. But it is the faith of St. Thomas, teaching him to say with holy boldness, 'My Lord, and my God.' It is the faith which enables every true Christian believer to testify with St. Paul: 'The life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'"

The "one faith" was not, then, dogmatic faith, but the faith which is the Scriptural condition of justification, and the habitual condition of spiritual life. Such a faith, of course, presupposed certain elementary theological opinions, but it was not definitions or discriminations of these opinions that Wesley required; to him an earnest, devout life implied them as much as the "one faith" presupposed them. He accepted the life as a better evidence of them than any technical declaration. Methodism, in other words, reversed, as has been stated,* the usual policy of religious sects which seek to preserve their spiritual life by their orthodoxy; it maintained its orthodoxy by its spiritual life; and it presents to the theological world the anomalous spectacle of a wide-spread Church, which for more than a hundred years has had no serious disturbance from heresy.

In this respect, as in others, it may have a special mission in the religious world, and for the ages to come.

Wesley seems to have perceived that unnecessary discriminative requirements of opinions are the most effectual means of provoking heterodoxy into existence, by challenging the doubts or curiosity of speculative minds—that the continual scenting out of heresy by the

* Book i. chap. 1.

Church is the surest means of producing it, as the persecution of doubtful opinions has usually strengthened and spread them.

While, therefore, he paused not in the beginning to anticipate whether the associations of his people would become permanent Churches, or even permanent societies, it would seem impossible to doubt that, according to his definition of a Church, they did become, in his own estimation, a genuine Church, and that, in gradually giving them, as providential circumstances required, an organic form, under which the preaching of "the pure word of God" and "the sacraments duly administered" were provided for them, he conceded their just claim to that character, though he wished them not to be dislocated, as such, from the national Establishment, which to him was a spiritual Church only in its spiritually-minded membership, and beyond this only an ecclesiastico-political institution.*

This interpretation of Wesley's views respecting the nature of a true Church, and the character of his own societies, is confirmed, it would seem, beyond a doubt, by the history of his own course, especially in the latter part of his life.

His societies included hundreds, and at last thousands of Dissenters. They joined him because of their dissatisfaction with the religious tenets of their respective sects, as well as for other considerations. They were unwilling to continue in their old communions, and were equally unwilling to enter the national Church. Did he then consider them as belonging to no Church, while living and dying in his own societies?

At first he knew not what consistence or form his own societies would take; he had no anxiety on that point; he left it to the Providence which, he believed, was directing him. But we have seen him taking step after step for their more thorough organization. He and his clerical associates administer to them the sacraments in their own humble preaching-houses; and he allows them, at last, to worship in their chapels during "church hours." Are the sacraments "duly administered" essential to a true Church? He would qualify the phrase; yet he ordains lay preachers to duly administer them to his societies in Scotland, and then in America, and finally in England itself. Did he, then, still believe that they were "societies," but not Churches?

He completes their organization at last by a discipline and con-

* So he expressly declares in his Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, and his Sermon on the Church. See also a remarkable passage bearing directly on this whole question, in his Plain Account of the People called Methodists, (written as early as 1748,) sect. i. l. Works, vol. viii.

stitution, and provides for their permanent existence, but never changes their terms of membership, as recorded in the "General Rules;" never inserts a dogmatic requirement in that document; and in his last years more than ever boasts of the liberality of his system. Did he not, then, consider the "General Rules" as a sufficient basis of Church communion?

But did he not provide a standard of doctrines for his people? Do not the deeds of his churches and the courts of England recognize his Notes on the New Testament and a portion of his Sermons as that standard?

Unquestionably he did believe in the expediency of such standards; he was too wise a man for the liberalism which would dispense with them; but the question recurs, whether he approved them as obligatory, or as merely indicatory standards? Good men, inquiring for a fitting place of religious communion, could see in the theological standards of Methodism what doctrines they would be likely to hear from its pulpits. They could thereby judge whether its societies would be suitable sanctuaries for them and their families. They found, however, but "one condition" required for admission to its communion—that defined in its "General Rules." Their honest individual difficulties or differences of opinion were not to expose them to the liability of arrest or excommunication; no "subscription" to human forms of expression was demanded; their moral conduct respecting their opinions, as respecting any thing else, could alone so expose them. They must not wrangle, but pray; they must not meet for disputation, but for fellowship and charity.

While Wesley thus sacredly maintained the catholicity of Church communion, he nevertheless guarded with care the theology of Methodism, so far as its public teachers were concerned. His Notes, and some of his Sermons, were made standards in this respect. This was in fact necessary for his catholic purpose; for what could more effectually promote theological variations and dissensions among his people, than continual variations or contradictions in their public instruction?

This theological uniformity of the pulpit was, however, but a *functional* requisition—a condition of admission to the ministry, but not to the Church. Methodism has similar functional discriminations for its offices of Leader, Exhorter, Local Preacher. A lack of intellectual ability, an impediment of speech, would be a disqualification for these functional responsibilities, but not for Church communion.

It is a noteworthy fact that, in providing for the organization of

American Methodism, Wesley did not change the "General Rules" as the basis of membership, though he prepared for it "Articles of Religion." This interesting historical fact is full of significance, as an example of that distinction between indicatory and obligatory standards of theological belief, which Methodism has, perhaps, had the honour of first exemplifying among the leading Churches of the modern Christian world. The "Articles of Religion" and the "General Rules" are both parts of the constitutional law of American Methodism; but the General Rules still prescribe the "only condition" of membership, and mention not the Articles or any other dogmatic symbols. Conformity to the doctrines of the Church is required as a functional qualification for the ministry, but Church members cannot be excluded for personal opinions while their lives conform to the practical discipline of the Church; they can be tried and expelled for "sowing dissensions in the societies by inveighing against their doctrines or discipline;" that is, in other words, not for their opinions, but for their moral conduct respecting their opinions. They cannot be expelled for anything short of defects which "are sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory."* And at what would Wesley himself have more revolted than the assumption that opinions, not affecting the Christian conduct of a member of his society, were "sufficient to exclude him from the kingdom of grace and glory?" †

* Discipline of American Methodist Episcopal Church, part i. chap. 8, sect. 4.

† Such, it will scarcely be questioned, is the right of communion possessed by a person *already* in the Methodist Episcopal Church; but it has sometimes been a question whether doctrinal opinions are not required for *admission* by the administrative prescription adopted since Wesley's day: (Discipline, part i. chap. 2, sec. 2,) "*Let none be received until they shall, on examination by the Minister in charge before the Church, give satisfactory assurances both of the correctness of their faith and their willingness to keep the rules.*" It may be replied, 1. That, according to Wesley's definition above, of the faith essential to a true Church, there could be no difficulty here. 2. That, as the requisition is merely an administrative one for the preachers, and prescribes not what are to be "satisfactory assurances," &c., the latter are evidently left to the discretion of the pastor, and the requirement is designed to afford him the opportunity of further instructing the candidate, or of receiving from him pledges that his opinions shall not become a practical abuse in the society. 3. If the rule amounts to more than this, it would probably be pronounced, by good judges of Methodist law, incompatible with the usages and general system of Methodism, an oversight of the General Conference which enacted it, and contrary to the "General Rules," as guarded by the Restrictive Rules. 4. It would be a singular and inconsistent fact, that opinions should be made a condition of *admission* to the Church, but not of responsibility (except in their practical abuse) with persons already *in* the Church.

It would seem impossible, indeed, that any other view than the foregoing could be compatible with Wesley's frequent and emphatic declarations in favour of the liberty of thought. The man who declared to his assembled preachers, "I have no more right to object to a man for holding a different opinion from my own, than I have to differ from a man because he wears a wig and I wear my own hair, though I have a right to object if he shakes the powder about my eyes," could hardly approve subscription to opinions as essential to the right of membership in the Church of Christ. We have noticed repeatedly his generous boast, that "one circumstance is quite peculiar to the Methodists: the terms upon which any person may be admitted into their society. They do not impose, in order to their admission, any opinions whatever." Members of any denomination, or of none, can enter the spiritual Church which he organized, provided they possess the necessary moral qualifications. "One condition," he continues, "and one only, is required—a real desire to save their souls. Where this is, it is enough; they desire no more. They lay stress upon nothing else. They ask only, is thy heart herein as my heart? If it be, give me thy hand."

Such was Wesley's "United Society," such the Church of Methodism, and as such, is it not a reproduction of the Church of the Apostolic age, and a type of "the Church of the future?" *

*The chief difficulty among "Churchmen" respecting Wesley's view of his United Society, arises from the fact that they have not appreciated his distinction between a simple Spiritual Church and a National Church. His tenacious regard for the latter, as existing in his country, has led them to disbelieve that he recognized the former as existing in his own United Society.

CHAPTER IV.

ECONOMY, INSTITUTIONS, AND USAGES OF METHODISM.

Origin of the Class—Its great Importance—Not a Confessional—The Tesseræ or Tickets—The Band—The Agape or Love-Feast—Origin and Ceremonies of the Watch-Night—Renewal of the Covenant—Methodism originates the modern Lay Prayer-Meeting—The Steward—Wesley's Rules for the Office—The Lay Ministry—Its Itinerancy—Number of Circuits—Training of the Itinerants—Wesley advises about their physical Habits—Against Screaming—Thomas Walsh—Supernumerary and Superannuated Preachers—The Preachers' Fund—Sufferings of the early Ministry—Statistics—An Itinerant among Robbers—Good-Humour of the early Preachers—Local Preachers—Wesley established the first Dispensary in London—His Home for the Poor—His Poor Man's Aid Fund—He founds the Stranger's Friend Society.

The United Society was the original form and Church of Methodism, but the Class, as we have seen, has usually been its germinal form; for though the Class was introduced subsequently to the Society, it has in most places been the beginning of the latter. Attendance at the Class-meeting is made one of the terms of Church membership in the General Rules. Wesley himself has recorded its origin.* Such were the incongruous elements gathered into his societies, chiefly from the neglected classes of the people, that he found much difficulty in maintaining strict moral discipline among them. "We groaned," he says, "under these inconveniences long before a remedy could be found. The people were scattered so widely in all parts of the town, from Wapping to Westminster, that I could not easily see what the behaviour of each person in his own neighbourhood was, so that several disorderly walkers did much hurt before I was apprised of it. At length, while we were thinking of quite another thing, we struck upon a method for which we have had cause to bless God ever since." He was talking with members of the society in Bristol concerning the means of paying the chapel debts, when one stood up and said, "Let every member of the society give a penny a-week till all are paid." Another answered, "But many of them are poor, and cannot afford to do it." "Then," said the first, "put eleven of the poorest with me, and if they can give any thing, well: I will call on them weekly; and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself. And each of you call on eleven of your neighbours weekly; receive

* Plain Account of the People called Methodists, Works, vol. viii.

what they give, and make up what is wanting." It was done. Soon some of these leaders informed Wesley that they found members who did not live as they should. "It struck me," he says, "immediately, this is the thing, the very thing we have wanted so long." He called together all the leaders, and desired that each would make a particular inquiry into the conduct of those whom he saw weekly. They did so, and many disorderly members were detected. Some turned from the error of their ways. Some were expelled from the society. "Many saw it with fear, and rejoiced unto God with reverence." As soon as possible, the same method was used in London and all other places. Evil men were detected and reproved. They were borne with for a season. If they forsook their sins, they were retained gladly; "if they obstinately persisted, it was openly declared that they were not of us. The rest mourned and prayed for them, and yet rejoiced that, as far as in us lay, the scandal was rolled away from the society."

It is the duty of a Leader, 1. To see each person in his Class once a-week at the least, in order to inquire respecting his spiritual condition; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require, and to receive what he is willing to give toward the relief of the poor and the support of the Gospel. 2. To meet the minister and the stewards of the society, in order to report to the former any that are sick, or any that are disorderly and will not be reproved, and to pay to the stewards what they have received from their several Classes in the week preceding.

At first they visited each person at his own house; but this was soon found inexpedient. It took up more time than most of the leaders had to spare. Many persons lived with masters, mistresses, or relatives who would not suffer such visits. At the houses of those who were not so averse, they often had no opportunity of speaking to them except in company; and this did not answer the end proposed, of exhorting, comforting, or reproving. It frequently happened that one affirmed what another denied, and this could not be cleared up without seeing them together. Little misunderstandings and quarrels of various kinds sometimes arose among kindred or neighbours, effectually to remove which it was needful to see the parties face to face. Upon all these considerations it was agreed that the members of each Class should meet together, and by this means a fuller inquiry was made into the conduct of every person. Those who could not be visited at home, or otherwise than in company, had the same advantage with others. Advice or reproof was given as necessity required, misunderstandings removed,

and, after an hour or two thus spent, they concluded with prayer and thanksgiving.

"It can scarce be conceived," writes Wesley, "what advantages have been reaped from this little prudential regulation. Many now happily experienced that Christian fellowship of which they had not so much as an idea before. They began to 'bear one another's burdens,' and naturally to 'care for each other.' As they had daily a more intimate acquaintance with, so they had a more endeared affection for, each other. And 'speaking the truth in love, they grew up into Him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplied, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, increased unto the edifying itself in love.'"

Thus did one of the most important means of the moral power of Methodism originate in a work of pecuniary charity. It has been not only a chief feature of the moral discipline of the denomination, but its financial utility has been incalculable. When the debt which gave it birth at Bristol was liquidated, the weekly contribution was continued and paid by the leaders to the stewards, at first for the poor; but when the lay ministry arose, the Classes became the source of its financial support, and have ever since been such in most of the Methodistic world. The Class rule, of a "penny a-week and a shilling a-quarter," has been effectively the basis of Methodist finance.

The Class-leaders, appointed by the pastor (for their duties are pastoral), inspected the society individually and weekly; and reported to him the result of this inspection weekly, in our day monthly—a more effectual means of discipline could hardly be conceived.

The extensive propagandism of Methodism could never have been prosecuted without its ministerial itinerancy, but its itinerancy could never have secured the moral discipline, or even the permanence of its societies, without the pastoral care of the Class-leader, in the absence of the pastor who at first was scarcely a day at a time in any one place.

The objection that such meetings are a species of popish confessional, has never been alleged by any one who has attended them. Their leaders are laymen; their members are obliged to relate nothing but what they please respecting their moral condition; and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find an example of their abuse in this respect.

Wesley borrowed from the ancient Church an important usage in connection with the Class-meeting. He issued printed tickets to their members, small cards bearing a pointed text of Scripture, and

often also a symbolical engraving: an anchor for hope; a guardian angel; a Bible encircled by a halo; Christ washing the feet of his disciples. The ticket was renewed quarterly, and dated, and inscribed with the name of the bearer. It admitted him to the Love-feast, and was, in fine, his certificate of membership in the society;* and, if he was unfaithful, he was dismissed by a refusal of the preacher to renew it. Those who bore these tickets, (*συμβολα* or *tesseræ*, as the ancients termed them, being of the same force with the *επιστολαι συστατικαι*, commendatory letters, mentioned by the Apostle,) wherever they came, were acknowledged by their brethren, and received with cordiality. By them it was also easily distinguished, when the society were to meet apart, who were members of it and who not.

The Band-meeting was copied by Wesley from the Moravians. It was adopted by him at Bristol, before the formation of the United Society in London, but was not recognized in the General Rules as an organic part of Methodism; and, from Wesley's own account of it, would seem not to have been generally introduced till it was found desirable as a supplement to the Class. Many members of Classes desired a means of closer communion; they wished to consult one another without reserve, particularly with regard to the sin which did still easily beset them, and the temptations which were most apt to prevail over them. "They were," says Wesley, "the more desirous of this, when they observed that it was the express advice of an inspired writer: 'Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.'" In compliance with their desire, he divided them into smaller companies; putting the married or single men, and married or single women, together. They pledged themselves that: "In order to 'confess our faults one to another,' and pray one for another that we may be healed, we intend, 1. To meet once a-week at the least. 2. To come punctually at the hour appointed. 3. To begin with singing or prayer. 4 To speak each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word, or deed, and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting. 5. To desire some person among us (thence

* Wesley says, every ticket implied as strong a recommendation of the person to whom it was given, as if I had written at length, "I believe the bearer hereof to be one that fears God and works righteousness." In 1765 it became a rule to give a distinct certificate or "Note of Removal," signed by the preacher, to members removing into other circuits.—Methodism in the Congleton Circuit, by Rev. J. B. Dyson, p. 103. London, 1856.

called a leader) to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest, in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins, and temptations." That their design in meeting might be the more effectually answered, Wesley desired all the male bands to meet him or his preacher every Wednesday evening, and the women on Sunday, that they might receive such particular instructions and exhortations as, from time to time, might appear to be most needful for them; that such prayers might be offered as their necessities should require, and praise returned for whatever mercies they had received.

The Band was more obnoxious to objection than the Class-meeting. There is no evidence, however, that it was attended by any important abuse; but as it was not enjoined in the General Rules, and was mostly superseded by the Class, it has generally fallen into disuse, and its rules have been repealed in the American Church.

The members of the societies assembled once a-quarter to celebrate the ancient Agape or Love-feast. "They met," says Wesley, "that they might 'eat bread' together, as the ancient Christians did, 'with gladness and singleness of heart.' At these Love-feasts (so we termed them, retaining the name, as well as the thing, which was in use from the beginning) our food is only a little plain cake and water. But we seldom return from them without being fed, not only with the 'meat which perisheth,' but with 'that which endureth to everlasting life.'"

Before the introduction of Methodism into Kingswood, the depraved colliers used to spend the last night of the year in drunken revels and Bacchanalian songs. The Methodists changed these meetings into religious festivals. Wesley was advised to put an end to them; "but," he says, "upon weighing the thing thoroughly, and comparing it with the practice of the ancient Christians, I could see no cause to forbid it. Rather, I believed it might be made of more general use; so I sent them word that I designed to watch with them on the Friday nearest the full moon, that we might have light thither and back again. I gave public notice of this the Sunday before, and, withal, that I intended to preach; desiring they, and they only, would meet me there who could do it without prejudice to their business or families. On Friday abundance of people came. I began preaching between eight and nine, and we continued till a little beyond the noon of night, singing, praying, and praising God. This we have continued to do once a-month ever since in Bristol, London, and Newcastle, as well as Kingswood, and exceeding great are the blessings we have found

therein; it has generally been an extremely solemn season, when the word of God sunk deep into the heart even of those who till then knew him not. If it be said, 'This was only owing to the novelty of the thing, (the circumstance which still draws such multitudes together at those seasons,) or perhaps to the awful silence of the night,' I am not careful to answer in this matter. Be it so: however, the impression then made on many souls has never since been effaced. Now, allowing that God did make use either of the novelty, or any other indifferent circumstance, in order to bring sinners to repentance, yet they are brought. And herein let us rejoice together."

The redeemed colliers of Kingswood are annually commemorated throughout the Methodist world by this solemn festival. One or more sermons, with hymns and prayers, occupy the last hours of the year till a few minutes before midnight; the assemblies then bow in silent prayer till the clock strikes the end of the old year and the advent of the new; when, rising with a song of praise, or a covenant hymn, they disperse quietly to their homes. These meetings are public, and their supposed possible evils are unknown, except in the conjectures of writers who have never witnessed them.*

In 1755 Wesley began the custom, still observed in many of his societies, of "Renewing the Covenant" on the first Sunday of the year. He explained its importance to his London societies, on successive mornings, before the solemn day arrived. A fast was also previously observed. He read in the public assembly a form of covenant from the writings of Richard Alleine, and calling upon all who would sincerely pledge it before God to stand up, eighteen hundred persons rose to their feet. "Such a night," he writes, "I scarce ever knew before; surely the fruit of it shall remain for ever."

The modern introduction of the custom of public lay Prayer-meetings has been attributed to the influence of Methodism.† Occasions of social prayer have doubtless always existed in the Church, in one form or another; but in modern times, before the advent of Methodism, they were usually conducted by clergymen or church officers exclusively, and were hardly a stated part of religious service. They now became general, and have since become a regular and essential usage of evangelical Churches throughout the world. The psalmody and the animation of Methodism gave them peculiar

* Southey's objections (Life of Wesley, chap. 21) have had existence only in his book, or in the imaginations of his readers.

† Smith's Hist. of Meth., vol. i. book iii., chap. 2. Porter's Compend. of Meth., part iv. chap. 6.

effectiveness; and, wherever they have extended, its lay piety and talent find in them a stated and powerful means of usefulness.

Wesley also established meetings for Penitents or backsliders, and Select Societies for persons who were especially interested in the subject of Christian perfection, but neither became permanent institutions of Methodism.

The office of Trustee has been sufficiently stated; it involved simply the holding and management of the chapels of the Connection, and the property appertaining to them. To the office of Steward pertained the management of the other finances of the body. The Steward received and appropriated the contributions of the Classes for the support of the ministry, the Love-feast collection for the poor, and all charities not appropriate to the trustees. The office arose, like most others in the economy of Methodism, from what would be called an accidental cause. The persons who persuaded Wesley to open the Foundry for worship, proposed to contribute to his support; he declined their offer, for his college fellowship afforded him all the income he needed. They insisted upon giving some financial aid to the new church. "Then I asked," he writes, "who will take the trouble of receiving this money, and paying it where it is needful? One said, I will do it, and keep the account for you; so here was the first Steward. Afterward I desired one or two more to help me as Stewards, and in process of time a greater number." He was not willing that the Steward should be considered merely a financial officer; as entrusted with the charities of the Church, like the ancient Diaconate, he would have the office consecrated by the best piety of his laity. In 1747 he prescribed for the Stewards minute rules. 1. They were to be men full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom, that they might do all things in a manner acceptable to God. 2. To be present every Tuesday and Thursday morning, in order to transact the temporal affairs of the society. 3. To begin and end every meeting with earnest prayer for a blessing on all their undertakings. 4. To produce their accounts on the first Tuesday in every month, that they might be transcribed into the ledger. 5. Each to be chairman in turn, month by month; the chairman to see that all the rules be punctually observed, and immediately to check him who breaks any of them. 6. To do nothing without the consent of the minister, either actually had or reasonably presumed. 7. To consider, whenever they meet, "God is here;" therefore, to be serious, to utter no trifling word, to speak as in his presence, and to the glory of his great name. 8. When any thing was debated, to let one at a time stand up and speak, the rest giving

attention, and to let him speak just loud enough to be heard, in love and in the spirit of meekness. 9. Continually to pray and endeavour that a devout harmony might in all things subsist among them : that in every step they might keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. 10. In all debates to watch over their tempers, avoiding all clamour and contention ; being "swift to hear, slow to speak ;" in honour, every man preferring another before himself. 11. If they could not relieve they should not grieve the poor, but give them kind words if nothing else—to abstain from either sour looks or harsh language ; to make them glad to come, even though they should go empty away ; to put themselves in the place of every poor man, and to deal with him as they would God should deal with them.

In 1743 Wesley appointed visitors of the sick as assistants to the Stewards, and gave them special rules ;* but this office has since been superseded by voluntary organizations in the Churches.

Next to the United Society, with its Classes, the great fact of the ecclesiastical system of Methodism was its Itinerant Lay Ministry. Its origin and many of its disciplinary regulations have already been stated. Wesley early saw what a mighty agency it could become in the Christian world. He trained and drilled it with the utmost diligence, and left it the cavalry of Protestant Christendom, not only in a moral but in a literal sense ; for by no other body of Christians has the horse been put into such general requisition for the spread of the Gospel, as by the Methodist travelling ministry.

They were kept in continual locomotion, passing from town to town almost daily ; they preached twice, often thrice, not unfrequently four times a-day. Their Circuits were long, including thirty or more different appointments for each month. They were changed from one Circuit to another, usually every year, and invariably every two years, often from England to Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and back again. There were twenty of these "rounds" in England, two in Wales, two in Scotland, and seven in Ireland, as early as 1749 ;† and at the first Conference after Wesley's death they had multiplied to seventy-seven in England, three in Wales, seven in Scotland, and twenty-eight in Ireland. As they increased or extended, the

* Myles's Chron. Hist., chap. i.

† [The author is in error here. In 1749 the societies were divided into *nine* divisions or circuits : 1. London, having ten subdivisions ; 2. Bristol, sixteen ; 3. Cornwall, three ; 4. Ireland ; 5. Wales ; 6. Staffordshire, with eight subdivisions ; 7. Cheshire, four ; 8. Yorkshire and Lancashire ; 9. Newcastle, with five subdivisions. The whole of these circuits were under the charge of ten assistants, including the two Wesleys.—E. E.]

preacher's liabilities of labour or transference increased also. Itinerancy, in Wesley's estimation, not only had a salutary moral effect on the evangelists, by keeping them energetic and chivalrous; it had the capital advantage of enabling one preacher to minister the truth to many places, and it made small abilities available on a large scale. Wesley says that he believed he should preach himself and his congregation "asleep," were he to stay in one place an entire year.* Nor could he believe that it "was ever the will of the Lord that any congregation should have one teacher only." "We have found," he writes, "by long and constant experience, that a frequent change of teachers is best. This preacher has one talent, that another. No one whom I ever yet knew has all the talents which are needful for beginning, continuing, and perfecting the work of grace in a whole congregation." "Neither," he adds, "can he find matter for preaching every morning and evening; nor will the people come to hear him. Hence he grows cold, and so do the people; whereas, if he never stays more than a fortnight together in one place, he may find matter enough, and the people will gladly hear him."

The itinerants were taught to manage difficulties in the societies, to face mobs, to brave any weather, to subsist without means, except such as might casually occur on their routes, to rise at four and preach at five o'clock, to scatter books and tracts, to live by rule, and to die without fear. The power of Wesley over them could be maintained by no man who did not, like himself, exemplify whatever he taught them; for he was the living model of whatever he endeavoured to make them. He prescribed the minutest rules of life for them, even such as concerned their physical habits. He found that some became "nervous," more probably by too much work than by too little, though he thought otherwise. He gave them advice on the subject: "Touch no dram, tea, tobacco, or snuff. Eat very light, if any, supper. Breakfast on nettle or orange-peel tea. Lie down before ten; rise before six. Every day use as much exercise as you can bear: or murder yourself by inches." "These rules," he adds, "are as necessary for the people as the preachers." He allowed his itinerants, however, to drink a glass of ale at night after preaching. He interrogated them closely, in his printed Minutes, about their habits. "Do you," he asked, "deny yourselves every useless pleasure of sense? imagination? honour? Are you temperate in all things? To take one instance, in food—Do you use only that *kind*, and that *degree*, which is best both for

* Not "preach himself out," however, as he has sometimes been wrongly quoted.

the body and soul? Do you see the necessity of this? Do you eat no flesh suppers? no late suppers? These naturally tend to destroy bodily health. Do you eat only three meals a-day? If four, are you not an excellent pattern to the flock? Do you take no more food than is necessary at each meal? You may know, if you do, by a load at your stomach; by drowsiness or heaviness; and, in a while, by weak or bad nerves. Do you use only that *kind* and that *degree* of drink which is best both for your body and soul? Do you drink water? Why not? Did you ever? Why did you leave it off? If not for health, when will you begin again? to-day? How often do you drink wine or ale? Every day? Do you *want* or *waste* it?"

His rules for a "helper" are stringent enough:

1. He was to be diligent; never unemployed a moment; never triflingly employed; never to while away time; neither spend any more time at any place than was strictly necessary.

2. To be serious; his motto to be, Holiness to the Lord; to avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.

3. To converse sparingly and cautiously with women, particularly with young women in private.

4. To take no step toward marriage without first acquainting Wesley with his design.

5. To believe evil of no one; to put the best construction on every thing; to remember that the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.

6. To speak evil of no one; to keep his thoughts within his own breast till he came to the person concerned.

7. To tell every one what he thought wrong in him, and that plainly, and as soon as might be, lest it fester in his heart.

8. Not to affect the gentleman; he had no more to do with this character than with that of a dancing-master, for a preacher of the Gospel is the servant of all. (But though he was not to affect the gentleman he was to be one in all good respects, as Wesley taught in his Address to the Clergy.)

9. To be ashamed of nothing but sin; not of fetching wood (if time permit) or of drawing water; not of cleaning his own shoes, or his neighbour's.

10. To be punctual; to do every thing exactly at the time: and, in general, not *mend* the Methodist rules, but *keep* them; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake.

11. He was to have nothing to do but to save souls, and therefore to spend and be spent in this work. And to go always, not only to those who wanted him, but to those who wanted him most.

12. To act in all things, not according to his own will, but as a son in the Gospel. As such, it was his duty to employ his time in the manner in which he should be directed; partly in preaching, and visiting the flock from house to house; partly in reading, meditation, and prayer. "Above all," wrote Wesley, "if you labour with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you should do *that part* of the work which we advise, at *those* times and places which we judge most for his glory."

He advised his itinerants not to continue public services beyond one hour, and seldom to pray longer than eight or ten minutes at a time; not to allegorize their subjects; to stick to their texts, and never to select such as are obscure. He denounced clamorous preaching. To one of his American preachers he wrote: "Scream no more at the peril of your soul. God now warns you by me, whom he has set over you. Speak as earnestly as you can, but do not scream. Speak with all your heart, but with a moderate voice. It was said of our Lord, 'He shall not *cry*:' the word properly means, He shall not *scream*. Herein be a follower of me, as I am of Christ. I often speak loud, often vehemently; but I never scream; I never strain myself; I dare not; I know it would be a sin against God and my own soul. Perhaps one reason why that good man, Thomas Walsh, yea, and John Manners too, were in such grievous darkness before they died, was because they shortened their own lives."*

Thomas Walsh was the first of the lay evangelists who dared to preach from the pulpit in London; they had always stood in the reading-desk. Walsh was a man of deep humility, but he believed himself a genuine ambassador of Christ, and respected his office. When he first arrived he walked up directly into the pulpit, disregarding the custom. The solemnity of his manner, and the commanding force of his eloquence, awed the congregation. None questioned his course, and from that time the lay preachers ascended the London pulpits, no man forbidding them.

We have seen how persistently Wesley enjoined upon them habits of study. To one who neglected this duty he wrote: "Hence your talent in preaching does not increase; it is just the same as it was seven years ago. It is lively, but not deep; there is little variety; there is no compass of thought. Reading only can supply this, with daily meditation and daily prayer. You wrong yourself greatly by omitting this; you can never be a deep preacher without it, any more than a thorough Christian. O begin! Fix

* Letter 308, Works, vol. xii. The American preachers could generally outscream their English fellow-labourers.

some part of every day for private exercises. You may acquire the taste which you have not; what is tedious at first, will afterward be pleasant. Whether you like it or not, read and pray daily. It is for your life! There is no other way; else you will be a trifler all your days, and a pretty, superficial preacher. Do justice to your own soul: give it time and means to grow: do not starve yourself any longer." He required them to study five hours daily.

Most of them became studious, and he says of them generally: "In the one thing which they profess to know, they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination in substantial, practical, experimental divinity, as few of our candidates for holy orders, even in the University, (I speak it with sorrow and shame, and in tender love,) are able to do."

Their support was generally meagre, and when enfeebled by disease or years they often suffered severely. If able to preach "only two or three times a-week," they were recorded as "supernumerary;" when broken down by the infirmities of age they were reported as "superannuated," and in both of these classes the evils of poverty were usually added to their other sufferings, during the first half century of Methodism. Beyond the casual assistance of the societies, the Preachers' Fund was their chief reliance in such cases; and each member of the Conference paid one guinea on his admission, and afterward half a guinea yearly for this purpose. If he became too infirm for "regular work," he was paid an annuity of not less than ten pounds from the fund; at his death his widow received from it a sum of not more than forty pounds, if she needed it. In the early periods of the ministry, "he who had a staff," says Christopher Hopper, "might take one; he who had none, might go without or stay at home." For some years no stated provision whatever was made for the preacher. At a later period the circuits were directed to pay, if they could, three pounds quarterly for his clothes and books. Mather was the first who received any allowance for a wife; it amounted to four shillings a-week. An additional allowance of twenty shillings a quarter was made for each child. When the preacher was at his own home, eighteenpence a-day was allowed for his board; abroad, he lived among the people. In 1774 it was ordered that each preacher should have £12 annually for his wife: £4 for each boy under eight, and each girl under fourteen years of age. The growth of their families, or the prostration of their health by labour and privation, compelled many of them to "locate," or "desist from travelling."

Of two hundred and eighteen, classed by a historian of Methodism as the "first race of Methodist preachers," more than half (one hundred and thirteen) retired from the itinerancy,* nearly all for such reasons. The early itinerants in America suffered in like manner. Of six hundred and fifty, who had been recorded in the Minutes in the United States by the end of the last century, about five hundred died "located," and many of the remainder were a longer or a shorter interval in the local ranks, but were able to resume their travels. The early American Conference records show a host of martyrs, nearly half of those whose deaths are recorded, fell before they were thirty years old; about two-thirds died after twelve years' service. A majority of the "first race of Methodist preachers," in England, who died in the itinerancy, fell prematurely, victims of their hard work.†

In America they suffered not only from incessant labours, but by the exposures incident to a new country, and the severities of a variable climate, sinking under the heats of the south or the wintry storms of the north, swimming streams, braving snows, sleeping but partially sheltered in frontier cabins or under the trees of the forest The English preachers had few such trials; but we have seen them suffering from destitution, travelling thousands of miles on foot for want of horses, and wading through the snows of the north from appointment to appointment. A Methodist writer, speaking of the original Macclesfield circuit, which included Macclesfield, Congleton, Burslem, Leek, Norwich, Buxton, and other places, and reached eastward into the Peak of Derby, says, that he has heard some of the old stalwart woodland shepherds speak of carrying the first preachers on their backs through the snow-drifts, which choked the roads in winter. Sometimes a preacher was seen with a spade strapped on to his saddle behind, when taking his departure from Macclesfield for the bleak portion of the circuit; the spade being deemed needful to cut a way for man and horse through the drifts of snow.

Amid the many odd and not a few weak things with which their simple autobiographies abound in the old Arminian Magazines—the much to smile at, and the many things to excuse or deplore as enthusiastic or superstitious—we can but wonder and arrest ourselves, often with tears, over the artless and unpretentious tales of their trials and triumphs, and their unconscious exhibitions of chivalric and heroic character. One of them who died at his

* See "Chronological List" in Myles's History, p. 294.

† Memorials of Methodism, (Second Series,) chap. 1. Boston, 1852.

post, writes with characteristic simplicity: "I have been in most of the circuits in the kingdom, and I trust God has been pleased to use me, and those with me during these twenty years, to unite thousands to the societies; but it is better to leave this to God and his people. They are our epistle, written by Christ to the rejoicing of our hearts. May their conversion be known and read by all that know them! I have been in dangers by snow-drifts, by land-floods, by falls from my horse, and by persecution; I have been in sickness, cold, pain, weakness, and weariness often; in joyful comforts often; in daily love and peace, but not enough; in grief and heaviness through manifold temptations often. I have had abundance of trials with my heart, with my understanding and judgment, with various reasonings among friends and foes, with men and devils, and most with myself; but in all these God in mercy has hitherto kept me. . . . . I have from my beginning thought myself the poor man's preacher, having nothing of politeness in my language, address, or any thing else. I am but a brown-bread preacher, seeking to help all I can to heaven in the best manner I can. O that in the day of Christ's judgment I may rejoice, not only in the sincerity of my labour, but in knowing that I have not preached, and laboured, and suffered without fruit, but have been the instrument of gaining souls to, and of keeping them with Christ!"*

Their continual travels exposed them sometimes to the highway robbers that infested England in the last century; but they had little fear of them, as they had little or nothing to lose. The foot-pads not only deemed them rather poor prey, but had reason to dread them for their superabundant wealth of religious zeal and exhortation. A poor evangelist, while travelling his circuit, was met by three robbers. One of the band seized his horse by the bridle, a second pointed a pistol at his breast, and a third caught hold of him to pull him from his saddle, all swearing they would instantly have his money or his life. He looked them steadfastly in the face, asking them if they had prayed that morning? They seemed confounded. But one of them snatched the itinerant's watch out of his pocket; another took off his saddle-bags, and pulled out a knife to rip them open; he cried, "Stop, friend! there is nothing there but a few religious books, and you are very welcome to have them to read if you please; as to money I have only twopence-halfpenny," which he took out of his pocket immediately, and gave to them. "Now," he added, "shall I give you my

* Thomas Hanson, Arminian Mag., 1780, pp. 483-485.

coat? You are welcome to any thing I have about me; only I would have you to remember I am a servant of God, and am now going on his errand. I am going to preach. I beg you will let me pray with you before we part, and it may do you more good than any thing I have given to you." At this one of them said to the others, "We will keep nothing belonging to this man; if we do, vengeance will pursue us." He took the money and returned it with his own hands into the preacher's pocket, and insisted that the second who had taken the watch should return it, and after a little hesitation it was replaced also; the third taking up the bags, laid them on the horse, and fastened them to the saddle. He thanked them all for "their great civility;" and again renewing his request that they would let him pray with them, he fell upon his knees on the road, "and prayed," says the narrator, "with great power." Two of the robbers, alarmed at this unexpected treatment, skulked away; but the third knelt upon the earth deeply affected, "so that there was reason to hope he was resolved to become a new man."*

Wesley sympathized with the poverty of his itinerants, and relieved them in every practical way; but he could usually give them only brave and comforting words. As late as 1788 he wrote to Jonathan Crowther: "The sum of the matter is, 'you want money,' and money you shall have, if I can beg, borrow, or—any thing but steal. I say, therefore, 'Dwell in the land and be doing good, and verily thou shalt be fed.' Our preachers now find in the north of Scotland what we formerly found all over England. Yet they went on! And when I had only blackberries to eat in Cornwall, still God gave me strength sufficient for my work."†

Notwithstanding their many hardships, they were notable as a cheerful, if not indeed a humorous class of men. Their hopeful theology, their continual success, their conscious self-sacrifice for the good of others, the great variety of characters they met in their travels, and their habit of self-accommodation to all, gave them an ease, a *bonhommie*, which often took the form of jocose humour; and the occasional morbid minds among them could hardly resist the infectious example of their happier brethren. Wesley himself mentions their cheerfulness as one reason why they were disliked by a class of Churchmen and other Christians. "Grave and solemn men," he says, "though too few are guilty of this fault, dislike

* James Rogers, Lives of Early Preachers, vol. ii.

† Letter 887, Works, vol. xiii. We have heard before of these Cornwall adventures from honest John Nelson.

many of the Methodist preachers for having nothing of that gravity and solemnity about them."* Cheerful as he was himself, perhaps as much from the same causes as from his natural temperament, he found it necessary continually to enjoin upon them to "be serious," to "never be triflingly employed." While they were as earnest as men about to meet death, and full of the tenderness which could "weep with those who wept," no men could better "rejoice with those who rejoiced." They were usually the best story-tellers on their long circuits, and of course had abundance of their own adventures to relate at the hearths and tables of their hosts. Not a few of them became noted, throughout the United Kingdom, as wits, in the best sense of the term, and were by their repartees, as well as their courage and religious earnestness, a terror to evil-doers. The American Methodist preachers were the greatest wits of the last century in the New World; the fact is historical, whether it be esteemed creditable or not; and, rightly considered, it is far from discreditable. If few men could better relish innocent humour, few were more devout, few greater labourers or greater sufferers.

The usefulness of these hard-working men is attested in almost every part of the earth whither the English language has extended. A writer, who has not been disposed to flatter them, admits "that it would not be easy, or not possible, to name any company of Christian preachers, from the apostolic age downward to our times, whose proclamation of the Gospel has been in a larger proportion of instances effective, or which has been carried over so large a surface with so much power, or with so uniform a result. No such harvest of souls is recorded to have been gathered by any body of contemporary men since the first century. An attempt to compute the converts to Methodistic Christianity would be a fruitless as well as presumptuous undertaking, from which we draw back; but we must not call in question, what is so variously and fully attested, that an unimpeachable Christian profession was the fruit of the Methodistic preaching, in instances that must be computed by hundreds of thousands, throughout Great Britain and in America."† He might have said millions. There are about two and a half millions of communicants bearing the name of Methodists in our day; millions have gone to their eternal rest, and many thousands of Methodist converts have entered other communions. Methodism has largely recruited its sister denominations for a hundred years.

The Local Preachers have always constituted a mighty arm of

* Answer to an Important Question, Works, vol. xiii.

† Issac Taylor, Wesley and Methodism, p. 130.

the Methodist service. They were men who usually pursued their secular employments, and preached at night and on Sundays in their own neighbourhoods; but many travelled extensively. They became much more numerous than the itinerant force, and combined and laboured in all the regions round about, according to a plan prepared by the Assistant or preacher in charge of the circuit.* Silas Told and Matthew Mayer have appeared as examples in these pages. Throughout the range of Methodism, the local preachers are still a powerful body of ministerial labourers; three of them founded Methodism in the New World, and their successors have founded it in many of the new States of the West. They usually begin as licensed exhorters, graduate to the local ministry, and thence into the itinerancy. The latter has always been recruited from the former. No feature in the ministerial economy of Methodism shows more wisdom, or has been more important, than this threefold arrangement and graduation of its public teachers. The licence of exhorters and local preachers was renewed annually; if it was found inexpedient to continue any one in office, he was readily set aside by the expiration of his licence. Wesley provided but few regulations for them, as all they needed could be found in the "Rules for a Helper."

The history and constitution of the Conference, as the ministerial and supreme body of the Connection, have already been so largely sketched that nothing need here be added respecting it, especially as its powers were modified and definitively settled in the decade following the death of Wesley.

Some important adjunct means of usefulness were added by Wesley to this singular system. Besides his Stewards and organized "visitors of the sick," he established a Dispensary in London. The Finsbury Dispensary is the oldest known institution of the kind, but it was founded twenty years later than Wesley's; and, as it was located in the neighbourhood where Wesley began this useful charity, it has been conjectured that it arose from his example.† He has recorded the origin of his plan.‡ He found among the poor, aided by his Stewards, many suffering from infirmities which, if uncured, must inevitably keep them poor. They were unable to pay the demands of physicians. "At length," he says, "I thought

* Smith says the earliest printed local preachers' plan he has met with is dated 1777.—Smith's Hist. of Meth., vol. i. p. 640. 1862.

† Smith's Hist. of Meth., vol. i. book iii. chap. 5.

‡ Plain Account of the Methodists, Works, vol. viii.

of a kind of desperate expedient. I will prepare and give them physic myself." For six or seven-and-twenty years he had made anatomy and physic the diversion of his "leisure hours," and had studied them a few months when he was going to America, where he imagined he might be of some service to those who had no regular physician among the colonists. He applied to the study again. He engaged for his assistants an apothecary and an experienced surgeon, resolving at the same time to leave all difficult and complicated cases to such physicians as the patients should choose. He gave notice of his scheme, announcing that all who were ill of chronic diseases (for he did not care to venture upon acute) might, if they pleased, come to him at a given time, and he would administer to them the best advice he could, and the best medicines he had. In five months medicines were occasionally given to above five hundred persons, many of whom he never saw before, for he did not regard whether they were of his society or not. In that time seventy-one of these, regularly taking their remedies, and following the regimen prescribed, were entirely cured of distempers long thought to be incurable. The whole expense of medicines during this period was nearly forty pounds. "We have," says Wesley, "continued this ever since, and, by the blessing of God, with more and more success."

The Dispensary was long known as an appendage to the Foundry. He also established a home for the poor, chiefly for sick widows, leasing two small houses near the Foundry for the purpose. It accommodated some fifteen persons, to whom, he says, he might add four or five preachers; "for I myself, as well as the other preachers who are in town, diet with the poor, on the same food, and at the same table; and we rejoice herein as a comfortable earnest of our eating bread together in our Father's kingdom."

He organized also a system of relief or assistance to the industrious poor. They frequently, he says, wanted, perhaps in order to carry on their business, a present supply of money. They scrupled to make use of a pawnbroker, but where to borrow it they knew not. He went, in a few days, from one end of the town to the other, and exhorted those who had this world's goods to assist their needy brethren. Fifty pounds were contributed. This was immediately lodged in the hands of two stewards, who attended every Tuesday morning, in order to lend to those who wanted any small sum, usually not exceeding twenty shillings, to be repaid within three months. It is almost incredible, he writes, but it manifestly appeared from their accounts, that with this inconsiderable sum two

hundred and fifty were assisted within the space of one year. No amount above five pounds was allowed at one time.

In his Journal for March, 1790, he writes: "Sunday, 14th, was a comfortable day. In the morning I met the Strangers' Society, instituted wholly for the relief, not of our society, but for poor, sick, friendless strangers. I do not know that I ever heard or read of such an institution till within a few years. So this also is one of the fruits of Methodism." Dr. Adam Clarke says that the Strangers' Friend Society was founded by Wesley and himself, in Bristol, in the year 1789. It is still one of the most effective charities of England. When one of Wesley's critics charged Methodism with neglect of the temporal welfare of the poor and sick, and of attempting no provisions for their relief, his defender could reply, "It so happens that such societies have been instituted. In every principal town we have a society for the visiting and relieving the poor, the friendless, and sick, who are not members of our society; and great are the sums thus spent, as well as the numbers of visitors, male and female, who *seek out* the victims of poverty and disease of every profession of religion, regarding only their necessities, in cellars, garrets, and other abodes of disease, contagion, and wretchedness, to minister to their wants. The good thus effected by their efforts has also been duly appreciated by public opinion, as the large public collections for the Strangers' Friend Society, and other charities, made in our chapels, sufficiently testify; as well as the liberal subscriptions and donations constantly received, and especially in London, from persons of all ranks entirely unconnected with us, but who know the persevering zeal of the visitors, and that systematic management of these societies, which, while it effectually guards against imposition, reaches, by patient investigation, the cases of retiring and modest distress."*

* Watson's Observations on Southey's Life of Wesley, pp. 188, 189.

CHAPTER V.

EDUCATION, MISSIONS, LITERATURE, PSALMODY, AND POPULAR INFLUENCE OF METHODISM.

Moral Condition of England at the Advent of Methodism—Influence of the Methodist Doctrines—Wesley's Educational Labours—Kingswood School—Lady Maxwell—The Orphan House at Newcastle—The School at the Foundry—Theological Schools—Success of Methodism in education—Connection of Methodism with the Origin and Success of Sunday Schools—Wesley and Fletcher's Interest for them—Missions—The First Tract Society was founded by Wesley—Sketch of its Plan—Methodist Psalmody—Charles Wesley and Isaac Watts—Methodist Singing—Handel composes Music for Methodist Hymns—Wesley's Writings—His Sermons—"Notes"—Journals—Miscellaneous Works—The Christian Library—The Arminian Magazine—Wesley the founder of Cheap Literature—Intellectual Revolution of England in the Eighteenth Century—Wesley's Agency in it—Conclusion.

In tracing the life and times of Wesley, we have unquestionably been recounting one of the most important, as well as most singular, revolutions in the religious history of modern times. But so manifold and energetic was the agency of Methodism in not only the religious, but the moral and social changes through which the English race, in both hemispheres, passed in the last century; so just the remark of a philosophic author, that the Methodistic movement was the "starting-point of our modern religious history," back to which we must look, necessarily, as often as we seek to trace "what is most characteristic of the present time,"* that a Methodist writer must feel no slight conflict between his sense of modesty and his fidelity to history in recording its claims in this respect. It has already been seen that the Bible Society, the Missionary Society in its modern Protestant form, those great publishing institutions misnamed Tract Societies, the adoption of the Sunday School by the church, the religious periodical publication, and most other characteristic religious agencies of our day, sprang directly or indirectly from it.† The Methodist historian is relieved in the delicate but necessary task of recording these claims, by the historical obviousness of their grounds, and the candour with which writers beyond his denominational pale have conceded them. A

* Isaac Taylor, Wesleyan Methodism, Preface.

† See pp. 373 and 451 of this volume.

Churchman has said, in language which Methodists themselves might willingly qualify, that "there were no Bible, Tract, or Missionary Societies then to employ the church's powers and indicate its path of duty. But Wesley started them all; he wrote, and printed, and circulated books in thousands upon thousands of copies; he set afloat home and foreign missions. The church and the world were alike asleep; he sounded the trumpet of the Gospel, and awoke the church to work. Never was such a scene before in this land. The correctness and maturity of his views, amid the deep darkness surrounding him, are startling, wonderful; like the idea of a catholic church springing up amid a sectarian Judaism. It is midday without the antecedent dawn; it defies explanation."*

The moral degeneracy of England at the epoch of Methodism, has already been shown by citations which seem almost incredible in our day, but which are given, not from Methodist authorities, but from representative men of both the Church and the Nonconformity of that period.† An English historian of high authority has drawn a picture of the preceding age which has surprised the world, notwithstanding the well-known facts of its demoralization.‡ A later authority has described the times in which Wesley appeared as scarcely less corrupt. He shows that the depravity of England, from the accession of the house of Hanover to the first decade of George III., was hardly exceeded in the decline of the Roman Empire, or in that of the old French monarchy.§ Its popular classes were even more corrupt than during the undisguised profligacy of the Restoration. The flagrant immorality of the latter prevailed chiefly in the circles of the court and the capital, while the severe morality and piety of the Commonwealth still pervaded the homes of the people to a great extent. But if the morals of high life improved somewhat under the Georges, the morals of the masses continued to decline; the reaction of the Restoration took a longer time to reach them, but continued to affect them longer; and they were at their lowest ebb when Methodism appeared.

* Rev. O. T. Dobbin, LL.D., Trinity College, Dublin, in Kitto's Journal of Sacred Literature, London, 1849. This eloquent article has since been published in London, with the title of "Wesley the Worthy."

† See book i. chap. 1.

‡ Macaulay's History of England.

§ History of England during the reign of George III., by William Massey, M.P., *passim*. Massey corroborates Thackeray's pictures of English manners given in his sketches of the four Georges, and in his Virginians.

Puritanism was known no longer by its severe morality. It existed chiefly in dwindled or deadened Churches. To Englishmen of the present day the state of the popular morals and of the police, in Wesley's age, is scarcely conceivable. The history of Methodism, thus far given in these pages, is an almost continuous proof of this remark. Though the great leaders of the movement commanded at last enough public respect to protect them from violence, yet, during more than half a century, we have seen their subordinate fellow-labourers contending with mobs which were led, not in a few, but in many instances, by magistrates, and by clergymen in their sacerdotal robes. The examples have been so frequent that they have palled upon the attention of the reader; with the modern abundance of newspapers, and the present avidity for the particularities of public news, the people of England in the last century would have had them to read almost constantly for sixty years. A magistrate, and especially a clergyman, heading such riots in our day, would excite the indignation of a nation; in that day, such facts seldom or never received notice from the public press. Deplorable as are still many aspects of popular English life, occasioned by the transition through which civilization is passing, especially in manufactures and commerce, candid historians are compelled to acknowledge that a change nothing short of a revolution began with the commencement of Methodism, and has continued to advance with it. To attribute this improvement chiefly to Methodism, might seem presumptuous. That the one has been coincident with the other, is nevertheless an historical fact. The equal revolution which has, meanwhile, taken place in the Churches of the realm, is generally acknowledged as the effect of the Methodistic movement; and if it be a fact that the moral condition of a country is dependent upon the condition of its Churches, or at least cannot advance against the general declension of religion, the connection of Methodism with the moral progress of England is an obvious national fact, and deserves to be recognised as an historical fact.

The means by which it exerted this influence have already been largely shown, but some of them remain yet to be considered.

The great common doctrines of Whitefield and Wesley were doubtless inestimable elements of their power; but not these alone, for "the very same things," says one of their critics, "had been affirmed from year to year, by able and sincere preachers, in the hearing of congregations assenting to all they heard—not indeed altogether without effect, yet with no such effect as that which ordi-

narily, if not invariably, attended the Methodistic preaching."* He asserts it to be an unquestionable truth, apart from which the history of Methodism is wholly inexplicable, that a divine energy was granted to the Methodist proclamation of the Gospel in a "sovereign" manner, and in an unwonted degree. But the Divine sovereignty works by means; and by the appreciable peculiarities or means of Methodism are we to estimate the conditions of its success. Its lay ministry, its itinerancy, its societies, classes, bands, love-feasts, watch-nights, its discipline and its charitable labours for the poor, already enumerated, were obviously among the chief instruments of its power. But it was not content with these.

Methodism was cradled in a University, though it was born in the Epworth Rectory. It could not therefore be indifferent, much less hostile, to the education of the people, though its poverty, and its absorption in more directly moral labours for their elevation, did not at first allow much scope to its educational measures. Wesley, however, never lost sight of such measures; and it is an interesting fact, that in the year which is recognized as the epoch of Methodism, the date of its first field-preaching, and among the miserable people where the latter began, it also began the first of its literary institutions. And if anything could enhance the interest of this fact, it is that the founders of both Methodistic parties, Calvinistic and Arminian, shared in the founding of the first Methodist seminary. Whitefield laid the corner-stone of the Kingswood School; and kneeling upon the ground, surrounded by reclaimed and weeping colliers, prayed "that the gates of hell" might not prevail against it; while the prostrate multitude, now awakened to a new intellectual as well as moral life, responded with hearty Amens. Wesley reared it by funds which he reserved from the income of his college fellowship, or received from his followers. It was the germ of the later institution which bears its name.

Among the eminent women of early Methodism was Darcy, Lady Maxwell, whose memoirs continue to be one of its most instructive biographies.† She encouraged its preachers in Scotland, when, after the Calvinistic controversy, they were generally discountenanced by even the devout portions of the Kirk. Bereaved

* Isaac Taylor, Wesley and Methodism, p. 144.

† Life of Darcy, Lady Maxwell. Southey says: "Her diary shows more of high enthusiastic devotion, unmingled and undebased, than is to be found in any other composition of the kind."—Life of Wesley, chap. 19.

of her husband by death in her nineteenth year, and of her only child four weeks later, she was never known afterward to mention the name of either, but turned with a broken heart from the world to seek consolation in a holy life, and the hope of that day when "the dead shall come forth." She found in Methodism a standard of piety which met the demands of her awakened conscience, and afforded the comfort which her afflictions needed. She has recorded, that had it not been for the Methodists she probably should never have known the consolations in religion which she had attained; for no other teachers around her had fully taught them, and it is seldom, she remarks, that we go beyond our teachers. She lived and died an intelligent, modest, but decided witness for the Methodist teachings respecting Christian perfection. She survived till 1810, and died the oldest member of the society to which she belonged. It was by the aid of this noble woman that Wesley was able to erect his noted Kingswood School. When he first mentioned the design to her, she put into his hands five hundred pounds toward it; and on learning, some time afterward, that it was indebted three hundred pounds, she forthwith gave him the entire amount, and her donations were conferred with a delicacy which gave a grace to her liberality.

The discipline of the school was unreasonably severe,* but it quickly had twenty-eight pupils. Its system of instruction was remarkably thorough, and its comparatively few students were placed under a faculty of no less than six teachers. It was one of the heaviest burdens of Wesley's life. He frequently alludes to its vexatious embarrassments. About three years after his death it was exclusively appropriated to the sons of preachers. Its accommodations were subsequently found to be insufficient for the growing numbers of such pupils, and the estate of "Woodhouse Grove," not far from Leeds, was purchased for a second institution of the same character.† Both have been important parts of the provision for the families of the Wesleyan ministry. In our day, from two hundred to two hundred and fifty sons of preachers and missionaries are educated within them, and gratuitously boarded and clothed during a term of six years. The Connection has expended between £300,000 and £400,000 upon these seminaries.

Wesley also early projected schools for poor children at New-

* Adam Clarke gives some curious examples of its severity. Life by his Son, book iii.

† Still later Kingswood has been transferred to "New Kingswood," near Bath, and the Woodhouse Grove institution has been rebuilt.

castle and London. His preaching-house at the former place was called the Orphan House, and its deed provided that it should maintain a school of forty poor children, with a master and mistress. Its site is now occupied by a substantial edifice for a Mixed and Infants' Wesleyan Day School, and also a Girls' Industrial School. More than four hundred children are daily receiving instruction within its walls.*

Of his school at the London Foundry, Wesley has himself given us an account: "Another thing which had given me frequent concern was, the case of abundance of children. Some their parents could not afford to put to school, so they remained like 'a wild ass's colt.' Others were sent to school, and learned at least to read and write; but they learned all kind of vice at the same time; so that it had been better for them to have been without their knowledge, than to have bought it at so dear a price. At length I determined to have them taught in my own house, that they might have an opportunity of learning to read, write, and cast accounts, (if no more,) without being under almost a necessity of learning heathenism at the same time; and, after several unsuccessful trials, I found two such schoolmasters as I wanted, men of honesty and of sufficient knowledge, who had talents for and their hearts in the work. They have now under their care nearly sixty children; the parents of some pay for their schooling; but the greater part, being very poor, do not; so that the expense is chiefly defrayed by voluntary contributions. We have of late clothed them too, as many as wanted. . . . . A happy change was soon observed in the children, both with regard to their tempers and behaviour. They learned reading, writing, and arithmetic swiftly; and at the same time they were diligently instructed in the sound principles of religion, and earnestly exhorted to fear God and work out their own salvation."†

We have seen "honest Silas Told" toiling in this humble sphere, from five o'clock in the morning till five in the evening, for seven years, during which he trained three hundred boys, "who were fitted for almost any trade."

It has already been stated that as early as his first Conference, in 1744, Wesley proposed a theological school or "Seminary for Labourers." It could not then be attempted for want of funds. The project was reconsidered at the next session, and failed for the

* Fourth Annual Report of the Wesleyan Chapel Committee, 1858, p. 14. London.

† Plain Account of the Methodists, Works, vol. viii.

same reasons. Kingswood School was made a kind of substitute for it, but the original design was never abandoned, and is embodied to-day in the two effective "Theological Institutions" of Richmond and Didsbury, and the two "Biblical Institutes" of American Methodism.

Such were some of the efforts for education made by the Methodism of Wesley's day. They have since given origin to a system of educational provisions as extensive, if not as effective, as belongs to any other English or American Protestant body, except the Anglican and Scotch Establishments: to the Wesley College in Sheffield, the Collegiate Institution in Taunton, (both of them in a collegiate relation to the University of London;) the Wesleyan Normal Institution at Westminster, whose stately buildings cost £40,000, and accommodate more that one hundred students preparing to be teachers; to a grand scheme of Day Schools which at present comprises four hundred and fifty schools, and more than fifty-five thousand pupils.*

The denomination in America, as we shall hereafter see, early took a similar interest in education. Soon after its episcopal organization it began a college; when this was consumed by fire it repeated the experiment, but was again defeated in like manner. It subsequently began that series of universities, colleges, theological schools, and boarding academies, which now comprises not less than a hundred and twenty institutions.

The moral and social influence, in England and America, of such a series of educational provisions, reaching from the first year of Methodism to our own day, must be incalculable; and, had it given to the world no other monuments of its usefulness, these would suffice to establish its claims as one of the effective means of the moral progress of the English race, in both hemispheres, since Wesley began his singular career.

It has perhaps exerted a still more profound as well as more general influence by another educational means.

As early as 1769 a young Methodist, Hannah Ball, established a Sunday school in Wycombe, and was instrumental in training many children in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.† Doubtless similar attempts were made before that time, but they were only anticipations of the modern institution of Sunday schools.

*Lecture on Wesleyan Institutions, by Henry M. Fowler, page 26, &c., London, 1858. Corrected by Nineteenth Annual Report of the Wesleyan Committee of Education, 1858.

†Jackson's Preface to Memoir of Hannah Ball, p. 9. London, 1839.

In 1781, while another Methodist young woman (afterward the wife of the celebrated lay preacher, Samuel Bradburn) was conversing in Gloucester with Robert Raikes, a benevolent citizen of that town, and publisher of the Gloucester Journal, he pointed to groups of neglected children in the street, and asked: "What can we do for them?" She answered: "Let us teach them to read and take them to church!" They immediately proceeded to try the suggestion, and the philanthropist and his female friend conducted the first company of Sunday scholars to the church, exposed to the comments and laughter of the populace as they passed along the street with their ragged procession.* Such was the origin of our present Sunday School, an institution which has perhaps done more for the Church and the social improvement of Protestant communities than any other agency of modern times, the pulpit excepted. Raikes and his humble assistant conducted the experiment without ostentation. Not till November 3, 1783, did he refer to it in his public journal.† In 1784 he published in his paper an account of his plan. This sketch immediately arrested the attention of Wesley, who inserted the entire article in the January number of his Arminian Magazine for 1785, and exhorted his people to adopt the new institution. "They took his advice," says an historian of Methodism, and "labouring, hard-working men and women began to instruct their neighbours' children, and to go with them to the house of God on the Lord's Day."‡ The same year, as we learn from a printed letter of Mary Fletcher, her husband, "lately hearing of Sunday schools, thought much upon them, and then set about the work." He soon had three hundred children under instruction, and diligently trained them till his last illness. He drew up proposals for six such schools in Coalbrook Dale, Madeley, and Madeley Wood. He wrote an essay on "the advantages likely to arise from Sunday schools," and designed to prepare small publications for their use, but his death cut off his plans.

Wesley's earliest notice of Sunday schools is in his Journal for July 18, 1784, the year of Raikes's published account of them. He speaks of them prophetically: "I find these schools springing up wherever I go; perhaps God may have a deeper end therein than men are aware of; who knows but some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians?" They were introduced into the metro-

* Memoir of Sophia Bradburn, in Wesleyan Magazine for 1834, p. 319.

† Wesleyan Magazine, 1846, p. 561.

‡ Myles's Chronological History, anno 1785.

polis by the Calvinistic Methodist, Rowland Hill, in 1786;* in the same year they were begun in the United states by the Methodist bishop, Francis Asbury, and this first Sunday school of the New World prefigured one of the most important later advantages of the institution, by giving a useful preacher to the Methodist Episcopal Church.† Wesley mentions, in 1786, that five hundred and fifty children were taught in the Sunday school of his society at Bolton, and the next year he found there eight hundred, taught by eighty "masters." Richard Rodda, one of his preachers, records that, in 1786, he formed a Sunday school in Chester, and soon had nearly seven hundred children "under regular masters."‡ Wesley wrote to him in the beginning of 1787: "I am glad you have taken in hand that blessed work of setting up Sunday schools in Chester. It seems these will be *one great means of reviving religion throughout the nation.* I wonder Satan has not yet sent out some able champion against them." On the 18th of April, 1788, Wesley preached at Wigan, "a sermon for the Sunday schools," and "the people flocked from all quarters in a manner that never was seen before." The year before his death he wrote to Charles Atmore, an itinerant preacher: "I am glad you have set up Sunday schools at Newcastle. This is one of the best institutions which has been seen in Europe for some centuries."

Thus is Methodism historically connected with both the initiation and outspread of this important institution. Under the impulse of its zeal, the Sunday school was soon almost universally established in its societies. A similar interest for it prevailed among other religious bodies; and in three years after Raikes's published account of it, more than two hundred thousand children were receiving instruction from its thousands of teachers.§ The Irish Conference of 1794 voted; "Let Sunday schools be established, as far as possible, in all the towns of this kingdom where we have societies;‖ and in March, 1798, a "Methodist Sunday School Society" was formed at City Road Chapel, London. In the following December, Drs. Coke and Whitehead preached the first

* Sidney's Life of Hill, chapters 7 and 20; and Jones's Life of Hill, chap. 9. Hill published a sermon in defence of Sunday schools, in reply to an attack made upon the institution by Bishop Horsley.

† Strickland's Life of Asbury, chap. 11.

‡ Wesleyan Magazine, 1846, p. 562.

§ Archdeacon Kay's sermon before the Sunday School Society. London, 1787.

‖ Irish Minutes for 1794, p. 9.

sermons before it.* In our day Methodism, exclusive of all the minor sects which bear the name, has under its direction an army of nearly 450,000 scholars and 80,000 teachers in England and Scotland ;† and more than 800,000 scholars and 150,000 teachers in the United States.

The idea of religious Missions is as old as Christianity, and was exemplified by the Papal Church through much of its history, and in the ends of the world. The Moravians early embodied it in their system. In the Protestantism of England it had but feeble sway till the epoch of Methodism. That sublime form of it which now characterizes English Protestantism in both hemispheres, and which proposes the evangelization of the whole race, appeared in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Societies for the propagation of the Gospel had previously existed in England, but they were provided chiefly, if not exclusively, for the Christianization of countries which, by reason of their political dependence upon England, were deemed to have special claims on British Christianity—the inhabitants of India, and the Indians of North America. An historian of missions, writing in 1844, says : "It was not until almost within the last fifty years that the efforts of the religious bodies, by whom Christian missions are now most vigorously supported, were commenced." ‡

Methodism was essentially a missionary movement, domestic and foreign. It initiated not only the spirit but the practical plans of modern English missions. Coke, as we have seen, so represented the enterprise in his own person for many years, as to supersede the necessity of any more formal organization of it, but it was none the less real and energetic. The historian just cited says : "The Wesleyan Missionary Society was formed in 1817, but the first Wesleyan missionaries who went out, under the superintendence of the Rev. Dr. Coke, entered the British colonies in 1786. The Baptist Missionary Society was established in 1792 ; the London Missionary Society in 1795 ; and the Edinburgh or Scottish, and the Glasgow Missionary Societies, in 1796. The subject also engaged the attention of many pious persons belonging to the Established Church, besides those connected with the London Missionary Society, and by members of that communion the Church

* Wesleyan Magazine, 1846, p. 565.

† Nineteenth Report of Wesleyan Committee of Education, 1858. It does not report from Ireland or the Missions ; in the latter alone there are about 10,000 teachers and 100,000 scholars.

‡ Ellis's History of the London Missionary Society, vol. i. p. 3.

Missionary Society was organized in the first year of the present century."* It has already been shown that the London Missionary Society, embracing most Dissenting bodies of England, arose under the influence of Calvinistic Methodism; and that the Church Missionary Society sprang from the Evangelical or Low Church party, which Methodism, Calvinistic and Arminian, had originated in the Establishment, Venn, the son of the Methodist Venn, being its projector.

Though Coke represented the Arminian Methodist Mission interest, as its founder, secretary, treasurer, and collector, it really took a distinct form some six years before the formation of the first of the above named societies. Coke spent more than a year in representing the Negro missions immediately after his second visit to the West Indies. In 1786 a formal address was issued to the public in behalf of a comprehensive scheme of Methodist missions. It was entitled "An address to the Pious and Benevolent, proposing an Annual Subscription for the Support of Missionaries in the Highlands and adjacent Islands of Scotland, the Isles of Jersey, Guernsey, and Newfoundland, the West Indies, and the Provinces of Nova Scotia and Quebec. By Thomas Coke, LL.D. 1786."† It speaks of "a mission intended to be established in the British dominions in Asia," but which was now postponed till these more inviting fields should be occupied. This scheme was called in the address an "Institution;" it was really such. Though not called a society, it was one in all essential respects; and if the fact that it was not an extra-ecclesiastical plan, but a part of the ecclesiastical system of Methodism, should detract from its claim of precedence in respect to later institutions of the kind, that consideration would equally detract from the Moravian missions, which were conducted in like manner.

The document proceeds to state, that "a particular account of the missions, with any letters, or extracts of letters, from the missionaries or others, that are worthy of publication, shall be printed as soon as possible after every one of our annual Conferences, and a copy presented to every subscriber; in which, also, the receipts and disbursements of the preceding year, with an alphabetical list of the names of the subscribers, (except where it is otherwise desired,) shall be laid before the public. The Assistants of our Circuits, respectively, will be so kind as to bring the money subscribed to the ensuing Conference, and so from year to year."

* Ellis's Hist. of the Lond. Miss. Society. See also Coke's Journals, p. 49.
† See Wesleyan Magazine, 1840, p. 573.

The Address filled several pages, and was prefaced by a letter from Wesley endorsing the whole plan.

The next year (1787) the Wesleyan Missions bore the distinctive title of "Missions established by the Methodist Society."* At the last Conference attended by Wesley (1790) a Committee of nine preachers, of which Coke was chairman, was appointed to take charge of this new interest. Coke continued to conduct its chief business; but the committee were his standing council, and formed, in fact, a Mission Board of Managers two years prior to the organization of the first of modern British missionary societies. Collections had been taken in many of the circuits for the institution, and in 1793 the Conference formally ordered a general collection for it.† Coke published accounts of its "receipts and disbursements." The amount for 1787 was £1167. The names of eminent Churchmen, Dissenters, and Calvinistic as well as Arminian Methodists, are reported on its list of subscribers. Among them are those of Whitbread, Wilberforce, the Thorntons, the Earl of Dartmouth, Earl of Belvidere, Lord Elliott, Lady Mary Fitzgerald, Lady Maxwell, Sir Charles Middleton, (afterwards Lord Barham,) Sir Richard Hill, Sir John Carter, Sir William Forbes, Lady Smythe, Hon. Mrs. Carteret, and the Hon. Mrs. Bouverie; the Rev. Mr. Dodwell of Lincolnshire;† Melville Horne of Madeley; Berridge of Everton; Abdy of Horsleydown; Dr. Gillies of Glasgow; Simpson of Macclesfield; Pentycross of Wallingford; Easterbrook of Bristol; Kennedy of Teston, and others.

In this manner did Methodism early prompt the British churches, and call forth the energies of the British people, in plans of religous benevolence for the world. Its missions in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and the Channel Islands, did much for the reformation of the domestic population. Besides its efforts in 1786 in the West Indies, it began its philanthropic labours in France as early as 1791, and its great schemes in Africa in 1811; in Asia in 1814; in Australasia in 1815; in Polynesia in 1822; until, from the first call of Wesley for American evangelists, in the Conference of 1769, down to our day, we see the grand scheme reaching to the shores of Sweden, to Germany, France, and to the Upper Alps; to Gibraltar and Malta; to the banks of the Gambia, to Sierra Leone, and to the Gold Coast; to the Cape of Good Hope; to Ceylon, to India,

* Wesleyan Magazine, 1844, p. 222.

† Minutes, vol. i. p. 278.

‡ This clergyman (of the Establishment) several years afterward made a contribution of £10,000 to the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

and to China; to the Colonists and Aboriginal tribes of Australia; to New Zealand and the Friendly and Feejee Islands; to the islands of the Western as well as of the Southern Hemisphere; and from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Puget's Sound.* In fifty-seven years, from 1803 to 1859, Wesleyan Methodism has contributed no less than £3,469,832, or $17,349,160, for foreign evangelization. In England the "Church Missionary Society" alone exceeds it in annual collections for the foreign field; but the Wesleyan Society enrols more communicants in its Mission Churches than all other British missionary societies combined. The historian of religion, during the last and present centuries, would find it difficult to point to a more magnificent monument of Christianity. Methodism, gathering its hosts mostly from the mines and cottages of England, has embodied them in this sublime movement for the redemption of the world. Its poor have kept its treasury full. They have supplied hundreds if not thousands of their sons and daughters as evangelists to the heathen; and, while they have thus been enabled to do good in the extremities of the earth, they have reaped still greater good from the reacting influence of their liberality upon themselves. They have received from it the sentiment of self-respect which comes from well-doing. They have been led to habits of frugality, that their poverty might be consecrated by liberality. They have been elevated above the perversion of local or personal sentiments, by sympathies with their whole race. They have been led to a knowledge of the geography of the world, and to habits of reflection upon its religious, social, and political interests, by the habitual reading of missionary intelligence. They have been brought into closer social as well as Christian communion with one another, by their frequent missionary meetings. Thousands of them have acquired habits of public usefulness by the management of their missionary affairs; and sentiments of universal philanthropy and religious heroism have been spread through their ranks to ennoble their own souls while saving the souls of others.

Another important instrument of modern Christianity is the Tract Society. Its title does not adequately express its present character; for tracts, popularly so called, constitute but a comparatively small part of its publications, books and periodicals being its chief issues. It is, in fine, a grand scheme for the consecration of the press to popular evangelization. As early as 1701 the "Society

* Alder on Wesleyan Missions, p. 6. London, 1842.

for promoting Christian Knowledge" was established in England. It was confined, by its regulations, to the Established Church. In 1750 was projected the "Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor." The present multiform and powerful institution called the Tract Society, is, however, of later date. The "Religious Tract Society" of London was organized in 1799, Rowland Hill being chairman of its first committee.* This institution, one of the most commanding of its class in our day, is usually considered the first which bore the title and character of a "Tract Society." Its historian has entirely ignored the labours of Wesley, who, half a century before its birth, not only wrote more tracts than any other man of the age, but began their circulation by his preachers throughout the United Kingdom. The names of several excellent women, who sent forth such publications in his time, are honourably commemorated; while the name which is really the representative one in this department of Christian usefulness is not even mentioned.† An omission so unfortunate for the honour, not to say honesty, of our common Christianity, must be regarded by candid men, of whatever party, as the more surprising and reprehensible, when it is remembered that John Wesley not only led the way in the writing and circulation of religious tracts,‡

* Sidney's Rowland Hill, chap. 9.

† Jones's Jubilee Memorial of the Religious Tract Society. 8vo. London, 1850. The first chapter of this work needs thorough revision. Its utter disregard of the connection of the Wesleyans with tract literature and labours, while it attempts an impartial history of the subject, is one of the most extraordinary violations of historical fidelity and literary honour, not to speak of Christian courtesy, to be found among the curiosities of literature.

‡ The author, in a natural enthusiasm for his subject, does, unintentionally I am sure, an injustice to many good men, the predecessors and the contemporaries of Wesley. His expressions would seem to imply that he considered Wesley the originator of the writing and gratuitous circulation of religious tracts. Such was not the case. Wesley, like most useful men, was not an originator but an adapter. To go no further back than the beginning of the 18th century, we find that one of the main objects for which the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was established, was *the publication and distribution of religious books and tracts.* But half a century earlier Richard Younge of Roxwell, in Essex, published a series of tracts, many at the nominal price of one penny; but most of them were to be given away, and to those who would not accept them as gifts, they were *lent to read.* He wrote against drunkenness, swearing, and other vices, on the prevention of poverty, on the duties of the rich, &c. The Nonconformist divines, too, contributed much to the spread of religious knowledge in this way. Joseph Alleine distributed gratuitously thousands of books, catechisms, and prayers; and his "Alarm to the Unconverted," of which, in Calamy's time, above 70,000 copies had been sold, was manifestly written for gratuitous distribution. Richard Baxter's

but really formed the first Tract Society of the Protestant world, seventeen years before the origin of the "Religious Tract Society" of London.

Before 1747 he had written and circulated thousands of his "Word to a Drunkard," "Word to a Sabbath-Breaker," "Word to a Swearer," and other similar publications. His Journals show that he habitually distributed them himself, as well as by his itinerants. In December, 1745, he writes: "It pleased God hereby to provoke others to jealousy; insomuch that the lord mayor had ordered a large quantity of papers, dissuading from cursing and swearing, to be printed, and distributed to the train-bands. And this day an 'Earnest Exhortation to Serious Repentance,' was given at every church door in or near London, to every person who came out, and one left at the house of every householder who was absent from church. I doubt not but God gave a blessing therewith." One of his biographers justly remarks, that "he was probably the first to apply, on any extensive scale," this means of popular reformation.*

In 1782 Wesley and Coke instituted the "Society for the Distribution of Religious Tracts among the Poor." Its "plan" was sent out in a printed sheet, which was appended to the November number of the Arminian Magazine for 1784.† Its regulations are few and simple, but comprehend essentially the modern plan of similar societies. These regulations provide that, "First: Every member shall pay half a guinea, a guinea, or more, annually. Second: A proportionable quantity of tracts shall be delivered yearly to each subscriber, according to his subscription, and as nearly as possible at prime cost, and carriage paid. Third: Every subscriber shall have a right to choose his own tracts, otherwise he will receive a proportionable variety of the whole." A "List of Books already printed" was appended; it includes thirty titles, two-thirds of which are single

"Call to the Unconverted." was another tract which was largely circulated, some 20,000 copies being distributed in less than a year. Most of Thomas Doolittle's writings were issued clearly with this intent. While Thomas Gouge—whose works, so well calculated to inspire Christian benevolence, are not now appreciated as they deserve—out of an income of £150 a-year, devoted £100 yearly to charitable purposes, the greater portion of that sum being spent in the gratuitous distribution and cheap publication of tracts and books calculated to further the glory of God and the benefit of man. In these days, well-written biographies of those who have sought in this way to bring souls to Christ, would act as additional incentives to Christian usefulness.—E. E.

* Watson's Life of Wesley, chap. 8.

† It was reprinted in the Wesleyan Magazine for 1847, p. 269.

sermons by Wesley himself, or "Words" written by him.* Then follow "an extract of the original proposals," and two commendatory certificates, the first signed by Wesley, who says: "I cannot but earnestly recommend this to all those who desire to see true Scriptural Christianity spread throughout these nations. Men wholly unawakened will not take the pains to read the Bible. They have no relish for it. But a small tract may engage their attention for half an hour; and may, by the blessing of God, prepare them for going forward." This recommendation is dated January 25, 1782. The second is dated nearly two years later, (October 27, 1783,) and is signed by Coke. It says: "Never was an institution established on a purer or more disinterested basis than the present. And surely all who wish well to the propagation of divine knowledge must afford their approbation at least to so benevolent a plan. And that God may incline the hearts of thousands to administer an effectual assistance thereto, is the ardent prayer of Thomas Coke."

A document of such historical interest as the "plan" of what was probably the first of tract societies, so called, is worthy of this particular reproduction. Its significance, in more than one respect, will too readily suggest itself to the reader to need an additional word of comment.

The ecclesiastical system of Methodism was, however, so thorough and energetic as to render almost unnecessary any such extra-ecclesiastical schemes of Christian labour. The whole United Society, in both England and America, was itself a great tract society as well as a missionary society. Long before this special organization, Methodism had even anticipated the modern system of colportage.

* This, the first Wesleyan tract catalogue, deserves preservation; its comprehensiveness well illustrates the practical character of both Wesley and Coke:—1. A Serious Call to a Holy Life, 8d.; 2. Alleine's Alarm, 3½d; 3. Baxter's Call, 2½d; 4. The Nature and Design of Christianity, 3s. per 100; 5. A Sermon on Awake, thou that Sleepest! 3s. per 100; 6. The Important Question, 6s. per 100; 7. The Heavenly Footman, 3s. per 100; 8. The Great Assize, 3s. per 100; 9. The Good Steward, 6s. per 100; 10. Sermon on the Trinity, 3s. per 100; 11. The New Birth, 3s. per 100; 12. The Way to the Kingdom, 3s. per 100; 13. The Almost Christian, 3s. per 100; 14. On Original Sin, 3s. per 100; 15. On Salvation by Faith, 3s. per 100; 16. The Spirit of Prayer, 6s. per 100; 17. Instructions for Children, 1s. 1½d. per dozen; 18. Tokens for Children, 1s. 1½d. per dozen; 19. A Hymn to the God of Abraham, 2d.; 20. A Word to a Freeholder, 1s. per 100; 21. Word to a Smuggler, 2s. per 100; 22. Word to a Soldier, 1s. 6d. per 100; 23. Word to a Sailor, 1s. 6d per 100; 24. Word to a Swearer, 1s. per 100; 25. Word to a Sabbath-Breaker, 1s. per 100; 26. Word to a Drunkard, 1s. per 100; 27. Word to a Prostitute, 1s. per 100; 28. Word to a Condemned Malefactor, 1s. per 100; 29. John Janeway's Life, 1½d.; 30. A Collection of Hymns, 1d.—E. E.

Its travelling preachers were generally colporteurs, and conducted their labours in that respect on a stated plan. As early as the Conference of 1749, the Assistant, or preacher in charge on each circuit, was required to take care that every society was duly supplied with books, and that the money for them was returned quarterly, and also that every society provided a set of books—that is a library—for the Helper. The preachers carried them in their saddle-bags through all their "rounds." It was a part of their ministerial work to scatter them broadcast. The Methodist Book concerns, in our times the largest religious publishing houses on the globe, were founded by the book sales of the Methodist ministry.

Wesley laboured incessantly by his pen for the elevation of the popular mind. The German historian of Methodism classifies, with German elaborateness, the great variety of his literary works, as Poetical, Philological, Philosophical, Historical, and Theological.* He complains that his countrymen, notwithstanding their characteristic avidity for all foreign literature, had not yet rendered any of these productions into their own language, and promises to translate them himself as among the valuable publications of the age. Though he wrote before Wesley's death, he states that many of them, after ten or twenty editions, could be obtained only with difficulty, and the whole could not be purchased for less than ten guineas, notwithstanding they were published at rates surprisingly cheap; for Wesley was the first to set the example of modern cheap prices sustained by large sales.† A catalogue of his publications, printed about 1756, contains no less than one hundred and eighty-one articles in prose and verse, English and Latin, on grammar, logic, medicine, music, poetry, theology, and philosophy. Two-thirds of these publications were for sale at less than one shilling each, and more than one-fourth at a penny. They were thus brought within reach of the poorest of his people.‡ "Simplify religion and every part of learning," he wrote to Benson, who was the earliest of his lay preachers addicted to literary labours. To all his preachers he said, "See that every society is supplied with books," some of which "ought to be in every house."

The lyrical literature of Methodism is pre-eminent both for its character and its extent. It was a necessary condition of the evan-

* Burkhard, Vollstandige Geschichte, &c., chap. 5.

† Lackington, the apostate but reclaimed Methodist, claims this honour, (Life, Letters 35–40,) but Wesley set him the example.

‡ "The Example of Elisha." A Sermon by the Rev. G. Qsborn. Wesleyan Magazine, 1840, p. 214.

gelical reformation of the eighteenth century, that an improved Psalmody should be provided. Sternhold and Hopkins, though not entirely obnoxious to Wesley's charge against them of "miserable, scandalous doggerel," were unsuited to both the intellectual and moral advancement which the new religious movement was to introduce; and Tate and Brady were so extremely deficient in these respects, that in comparison with them Sternhold and Hopkins have been called David and Asaph.* The necessary Psalmody was not only provided as a result of the new movement, but was begun even in anticipation of it. The Wesleys published their first hymn-book as early as 1738, the year in which they date their regenerated life;† and the next year, the epoch of Methodism was signalized by the appearance of their "Hymns and Sacred Poems," three editions of which appeared before its close. And now rapidly followed, year after year, sometimes twice a-year, not only new editions of these volumes, but new poetic works, which were scattered more extensively than any other of their publications through England, Wales, Ireland, the British West Indies, the North American provinces, and the United States, till not less than forty-seven poetical publications were enumerated among their literary works; and before Wesley's death a common psalmody, sung mostly to a common music, resounded through all the Methodist chapels of the English and American world. The achievement accomplished by Methodism in this respect, is alone one of the most extraordinary historical facts of the last century. Its influence on the popular taste, intellectual as well as moral, could not fail to be incalculably great. So thorough has been the subsequent revolution in the popular appreciation of sacred poetry, that much of the Psalmody sung in the churches of England at the advent of Methodism, would not

* Coleridge, Note to Southey's Wesley, chap. 21.

† "A Collection of Psalms and Hymns. London: Printed in the year 1738." This interesting volume was never reprinted, and is now rarely to be met with. No copy is to be found in the library of the British Museum, and few private libraries possess it. It has no compiler or printer's name, and no preface. It has been described as a Moravian production; "but," says Jackson (Life of C. Wesley), "its general cast of sentiment is exactly that of the two Wesleys just before they obtained the Christian salvation." Charles Wesley seems, however, to have had no hand in it. Its seventy psalms and hymns are selected from the following authors:—Thirty-three from Watts, thirteen from Tate and Brady, six from Herbert, four from Norris, three from Bishop Ken, one from Addison, one from Dryden, one from Roscommon, one from the liturgy, one the authorship of which is unknown, and the remaining six are translations by John Wesley, five from the German, and one from the Spanish.—E. E.

now be tolerated in public assemblies. Its effect, in many instances, would even be ludicrous.

Watts deserves the credit of leading the way in this important reform. The first poetical publication of the Wesleys was largely made up of his hymns, but Charles Wesley soon became his rival in popular estimation. They towered above all their predecessors and contemporaries in this department of literature, and no later writer of hymns can dispute their common superiority. Their example, and the new religious wants of the times, prompted the emulation or genius of many able but inferior writers,* most of them directly or indirectly under the Methodistic influence, and the hymns of Doddridge, Toplady, Newton, Cowper, Cennick, Steele, and Beddome rapidly appeared, and promoted the lyrical reform. The comparative claims of Watts and Charles Wesley are yet undetermined, but their common pre-eminence is undisputed. The verdict of literary criticism has generally been in favour of Watts; but Charles Wesley has suffered from the undeserved prejudice of the literary world against Methodism, a prejudice now fast giving way. In proportion as it has subsided, has his extraordinary genius come to be recognized; and it has become probable that sooner or later he will be pronounced the equal if not the superior of his great contemporary.† Watts himself acknowledged that Charles Wesley's unrivalled hymn entitled "Wrestling Jacob," was worth all the verses he himself had written.

Every important doctrine of Holy Scripture, every degree of spiritual experience, almost every shade of religious thought and feeling, and nearly every ordinary relation and incident of human life, are treated in his abundant and ever varying verse. No poet surpasses him in the variety of his themes. Rarely can any man open his volumes without finding something apposite to his own moods or wants.

* This remark does not detract from Cowper's poetical excellence in other respects. Milton, it has been said, composed but one good psalm.

† Creamer (Methodist Hymnology, *passim*, New York, 1848) agrees with John Wesley and Thomas Jackson in according him the superiority. This department of Methodist literature has given birth to a number of valuable works on Hymnology. Creamer's is the most comprehensive and thorough. See also Burgess's Wesleyan Hymnology, London, 1845, (an able and critical work.) Roberts's Hymnology, Bristol, 1808. Also articles in Methodist Quarterly Review, April, 1844, (by Rev. Dr. Floy,) and Southern Methodist Quarterly Review, January, 1848; Jackson's Review of Charles Wesley's Poetry, Life of Charles Wesley, chap 27; Watson's elaborate note, Life of Wesley, chap. 14; and Montgomery's Christian Psalmist, Introduction.

The whole soul of Charles Wesley was imbued with poetic genius. His thoughts seemed to bask and revel in rhythm. The variety of his metres (said to be unequalled by any English writer whatever) shows how impulsive were his poetic emotions, and how wonderful his facility in their spontaneous and varied utterance. In the Wesleyan Hymn-Book alone they amount to at least twenty-six, and others are found in his other productions. They march at times, like lengthened processions, with solemn grandeur; they sweep at other times like chariots of fire through the heavens; they are broken like the sobs of grief at the grave-side, play like the joyful affections of childhood at the hearth, or shout like victors in the fray of the battle-field. No man ever surpassed Charles Wesley in the harmonies of language. To him it was a diapason.

He never seems to labour in his poetic compositions. The reader feels that they were necessary utterances of a heart palpitating with emotion and music. No words seem to be put in for effect, but effective phrases, brief, surprising, incapable of improvement, are continually and spontaneously occurring, "like lightning," says Montgomery, "revealing for a moment the whole hemisphere." His language is never tumid; the most and the least cultivated minds appreciate him with surprised delight; his metaphors, abundant and vivid, are seldom far-fetched or strained; his rhymes seldom or never constrained. His style is throughout severely pure.

The biographer of Watts acknowledges "the faulty versification and inelegant construction of some of his hymns, which have been pointed out as their principal defects;" but adds, "they would have never occurred had they been written under the same circumstances as those of his Arminian successor." * The difference of "circumstances" may account for the fact, but does not cancel it. He contends for the superiority of Watts, but admits the talent of Wesley. "In estimating," he says, "the merits of these two great hymnists—the greatest unquestionably that our country can boast—I should not hesitate to ascribe to the former greater skill in design, to the latter in execution; to the former more originality, to the latter more polish. Many of Wesley's flights are bold, daring, and magnificent." "Originality" and "skill in design," are among Charles Wesley's most peculiar excellences. A critic, whose theological predilections are all in favour of Watts, remarks: "The opening couplets of his hymns and psalms often give brilliant pro-

* Milner's Life of Watts. Creamer makes it appear probable that Milner was ignorant of the "far greater mass" of Wesley's hymns Impartial critics will at least agree that Milner has mistaken the chief traits of Wesley's genius.

mises; they seem to be the preludes of faultless lyrics—outbursts of genuine song, which need only to be sustained to be without superiors in uninspired verse. But often they are not sustained. They are followed by stanzas which doom them in every pulpit."* The wings of Charles Wesley's muse seldom or never droop in her flight.

Through most of his life the poet of Methodism incessantly surprised its societies by the appearance of new poetical publications.† Besides his Hymns for Sunday public worship, special "Hymns for the Watch-night," "Hymns on the Lord's Supper," "Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord," "Hymns for our Lord's Resurrection," "Hymns for Ascension-day," "Gloria Patri, or, Hymns to the Trinity," "Hymns for the Public Thanksgiving-day," Oct. 9, 1746, "Hymns occasioned by the Earthquake" in 1750, "Hymns for Times of Trouble and Persecution" in 1744, "Hymns for the expected Invasion," 1756, "Hymns for Methodist Preachers" in 1758, "Hymns for New-Year's Day," "Hymns for the Use of Families," "Hymns for Children, &c.," "Funeral Hymns," "Hymns written in the Times of the Tumults" in 1780, "Hymns for the Nation" in 1782, and, last of all his publications, poetic "Prayers for Condemned Malefactors," in 1785—but three years before he ceased at once to sing and live—kept the Methodist community, and the popular mind generally, more or less astir by the rapturous strains of his lyre. Many of them related to contemporaneous events, which could not fail to give them special interest and influence. His "Funeral Hymns," unrivalled by any similar poetry, were sung, as we have seen, along the highways as the dead were borne to their graves. His "Hymns for Families" are admired by some of his critics as the best examples of his genius. They are at least the best exhibition of his own pure and genial heart, as many of their themes were drawn from incidents of his domestic life. They consist of pieces "For a Woman in Travail," "Thanksgiving for her Safe Delivery," "At the Baptism of a Child," "At sending a Child to the Boarding School," "Thanksgiving after a Recovery from the Smallpox," "Oblation of a Sick Friend," "Prayers for a Sick Child," "A Father's Prayer for his Son," "The Collier's Hymn," "For a Persecuting Husband," "For an Unconverted Wife," "For Unconverted Relations," "For a Family in Want," "To be sung at the Tea-table," "For one retired into the Country," "A Wedding Song." This volume contains also

* Art. "Hymnology," in Bibliotheca Sacra, January, 1859.

† For a chronological list of the writings of John and Charles Wesley, see *Appendix.*

many other hymns for parents and children, masters and servants, for domestic bereavements, for the Sabbath, for sleep, for going to work, for morning and evening.

In the Wesleyan Hymn-book are six hundred and twenty-seven* hymns by Charles Wesley; but these are not one-tenth of his poetical compositions. About four thousand six hundred have been printed, and about two thousand still remain in manuscript. In the space of twenty-two years he revised his publications eight times;† but the almost perfect literary finish of his hymns, as contained in the Wesleyan Collection, is to no small extent the effect of his brother's revision. John Wesley was rigorously severe in his criticisms, and appeared to be conscious that the psalmody of Methodism was to be one of its chief providential facts—at once its liturgy and psalter to millions. Throughout his life, therefore, he frequently returned to the task of its laborious revision. He enriched it himself with some fine original contributions, and with about twenty-four translations from the German.‡ He has not only given the latter better versions than they have received from any other hand, but has excelled the originals. The biographer of Watts regrets that no sufficiently able hand has remedied the defects of his style and versification. He would, doubtless, compare better with Charles Wesley in these respects, had he possessed so skilful a corrector as the latter found in his brother.§ The Methodist psalmody was, in fine, the lifelong labour of both the Wesleys, and is one of the noblest monuments of the religious movement of the eighteenth century. The spirit of that great evangelical revolution is embodied for ever in the poetry of Charles

* [Six hundred and twenty-six, see *Kirk's Original Titles.*—E. E.]

† [His "Hymns on the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles," in five quarto manuscript volumes, which have never been published entire, bear an inscription showing that in the course of twenty-two years they had undergone eight revisions; and probably his other works were revised with equal care *prior* to publication, but *after* publication he rarely revised them.—E. E.]

‡ Watson supposed that some if not all of these were translated by Charles Wesley; and Jackson attributed them to John: Creamer and Burgess make out good proof that they were all translated by the latter.

§ Wesley's occasional emendations of Watts are striking examples of his own poetic skill. The grand hymn, "Before Jehovah's awful throne," is an instance.

> "Nations attend before his throne
> With solemn fear, with sacred joy."—*Watts.*
>
> "Before Jehovah's awful throne
> Ye nations bow with sacred Joy."—*Wesley.*

Wesley. Nothing else of human origin, not even the Sermons of John Wesley, more fully expresses the very essence of Methodism. A competent judge has said: "These very hymns, if the writer had not been connected with Methodism, would have shown a very different phase; for while the depth and richness of them are the writer's, the epigrammatic intensity, and the *pressure* which marks them, belong to Methodism. They may be regarded as the representatives of a modern devotional style which has prevailed quite as much beyond the boundaries of the Wesleyan community as within it. Charles Wesley's hymns on the one hand, and those of Toplady, Cowper, and Newton, on the other, mark that great change in religious sentiment which distinguishes the times of Methodism from the staid nonconforming era of Watts and Doddridge." * His hymns are of such pure and idiomatic English that their style can never become obsolete, unless our language shall become thoroughly corrupt; their sentiments are so genuine, not only to Christianity but humanity, that they can never cease to command the response of the common human heart. His services to Methodism in this respect can never be over-estimated. More than a quarter of a century since, the Methodist hymns were sold at the rate of sixty thousand volumes annually in England;† they have been issued at an immensely larger rate in America. Their triumphant melodies swell farther and farther over the world every year, and their influence, moral and intellectual, is beyond all calculation.

While they have been of inestimable service as exponents of Methodist theology and piety, they have also served to correct that tendency to doggerel verse which is so frequent among the common people in seasons of strong religious excitement. Methodism has had often to resist this tendency; it has been able to do so chiefly by the power of its hymns; they are so varied, so vivid, and so simple, that they hardly leave a motive for the use of any other lyrical compositions. Justly does John Wesley say, in his preface to the "Collection for the Use of the People called Methodists," that "in these hymns there are no doggerel, no botches, nothing put in to patch up the rhyme, no feeble expletives. Here is nothing turgid or bombastic on the one hand, or low and creeping on the other. Here are no cant expressions, no words without meaning. Here are (allow me to say) both the purity, the strength,

* Isaac Taylor, Wesley and Methodism. p. 89.

† [At the Conference of 1860, 137,000 Hymn Books were reported to have been sold during the year.—E. E.]

and the elegance of the English language; and at the same time, the utmost simplicity and plainness, suited to every capacity."

While giving the masses divine songs, Wesley also endeavoured to make them sing. He was continually urging his preachers to set the example, and not only exhort the people to follow it, but to induce them to learn the science of music. "Preach frequently on singing," he said, in the Minutes of the Conference; "suit the tune to the words;" "do not suffer the people to sing too slow;" "let the women sing their parts alone; let no man sing with them, unless he understands the notes and sings the bass;" "exhort every one in the congregation to sing; in every large society let them learn to sing;" "recommend our Tune Book everywhere." As early as 1742 he issued "A Collection of Tunes set to Music, as they are sung at the Foundry." He published a small work on "The Grounds of Vocal Music." Three other publications followed these, at intervals, on "Sacred Harmony," adapted to "the voice, harpsichord, and organ," for he was not opposed to instrumental music in divine worship; though, for the prevention of disputes in the societies, he directed them to set up "no organ anywhere till proposed in the Conference."* It was not long before he could justly boast of the superiority of the Methodist singing over that of the churches of the Establishment: "Their solemn addresses to God," he says, "are not interrupted either by the formal drawl of a parish clerk, the screaming of boys, who bawl out what they neither feel nor understand, or the unseasonable and unmeaning impertinence of a voluntary on the organ. When it is seasonable to sing praise to God, they do it with the spirit and with the understanding also; not in the miserable, scandalous doggerel of Sternhold and Hopkins; but in psalms and hymns which are both sense and poetry, such as would sooner provoke a critic to turn Christian, than a Christian to turn critic. What they sing is, therefore, a proper continuation of the spiritual and reasonable service; being selected for that end, not by a poor humdrum wretch, who can scarcely read what he drones out with such an air of importance, but by one who knows what he is about, and how to connect the preceding with the following part of the service; nor does he take just "two staves," but more or less, as may best raise the soul to God, especially when sung in well composed and well adapted tunes; not by a handful of wild unawakened striplings, but by a whole serious congregation; and these not lolling at ease, or in the indecent posture of sitting, drawl-

* Large Minutes, 1789.

ing out one word after another; but all standing before God, and praising him lustily, and with a good courage."* The Methodist hymn-music early took a high form of emotional expression. It could not be otherwise with a community continually stirred by religious excitement; it was also a necessity of the rapturous poetry of Charles Wesley, for tame or common-place music would be absurd with it. Handel found in the Methodist Hymns a poetry worthy of his own grand genius, and he set to music those beginning, "Sinners, obey the Gospel word!" "O love divine, how sweet thou art!" "Rejoice! the Lord is King."†

Next to Charles Wesley's Hymns, John Wesley's Sermons were the chief staple of Methodist literature during the last century. They were continually appearing in cheap editions as tracts, or in costlier forms as volumes. They comprise one hundred and forty-one discourses, consisting of five series. The first series, fifty-three in number, was published in four volumes in 1771, and constitutes, with his Notes on the New Testament, the standard of Methodist theology, as recognized in the Deed of Declaration, and the trust-deeds of Wesleyan chapels. The second series comprises fifty-five discourses, which were mostly first printed in the Arminian Magazine, and were collected, revised, and published by Wesley himself, in four volumes in 1788. The third includes eighteen sermons prepared for and published in the Arminian Magazine, but not afterwards revised by Wesley. The fourth consists of seven discourses, published separately, but never inserted by him in any collected edition of his sermons: they were preached on special occasions, and include, among others, a sermon delivered before the University of Oxford in 1735, and his celebrated discourse on Free Grace. In the fifth series are eight sermons which appear never to have been designed by him for publication, but were selected from his papers after his death.

His "Notes on the New Testament" are celebrated for their terseness and laconic pertinence. The text is a new translation, and is remarkable as having anticipated many of the improved readings of later critics.‡ For the comments he was largely in-

* Letter to a Friend. Works, vol. xiii.

† Wesleyan Magazine, 1826, p. 817. This music was published in 1826, from the originals of Handel, found among the musical manuscripts in the Library of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge University.

‡ Some of them have been adopted by scholars of high character. Hales, Campbell, and Sharp are much indebted to them. Not a few of Dean Trench's happiest suggestions for a revision of the text were anticipated by Wesley.

debted to Bengelius. He began this invaluable work on Sunday, January 6, 1754, as the occupation of an interval of sickness, during which he was interdicted from preaching by medical authority, and finished it September 23, 1755. The first edition appeared in 1755. All his large societies were directed to provide copies for his preachers. A second edition was issued in 1757, and in 1760–61–62 a third appeared, in three duodecimo volumes, for the convenience of his itinerants, who had to carry them in their saddle-bags, and who were enjoined "frequently to read and enlarge upon a portion" of them in public. In 1788, Wesley issued them again with his final revisions.*

His "Notes on the Old Testament" are now only occasionally found in copies of the first edition. They were spoiled by the printer, and Wesley never had time for the formidable task of revising them. While passing through the press it was found after some of the sheets had been printed that, from the work being set up in a larger type than Wesley intended, it would be expensive, and therefore unsaleable among the mass of Methodist readers. To avoid this liability the Notes were bunglingly abridged by the printer, and the publication failed.†

Wesley's Journals are the most entertaining productions of his pen. They are the history of the man and of his cause. They appeared at irregular intervals in twenty-one parts, and record with singular conciseness, yet with minuteness, his personal life, from his departure for Georgia, October 14, 1735, to the autumn before his death, October 24, 1790. They have afforded the most important materials for our pages. Besides their historical value, they are replete with curious incidents, criticisms of books, theological and philosophical speculations, and references to contemporary men and events. For more than half a century they keep us not only weekly, but almost daily, in the company of the great man, in his travels, his studies, and his public labours.

His miscellaneous works were surprisingly numerous, and addressed, as many of them were, to some public question or current interest, they must have had a powerful influence on the multitudes

* "We notice the quarto edition of the 'Notes on the New Testament,' as the most elegantly printed book Mr. Wesley ever published, and embellished with one of the best of his early prints that we have seen."—Hampson's Life of Wesley, vol. iii. p. 147. This likeness was carved by one of his lay preachers, John Downes, on the top of a stick, and engraved on copper by the same hand. Downes was a genius.

† Adam Clarke's Commentary, General Preface.

of his people. Some of them, like his "Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion," chiefly in defence of the Methodistic movement, and his treatise on "Original Sin," in answer to Dr. Taylor of Norwich, are elaborate productions. He prepared a History of England, and a History of the Church, each in four volumes, and a Compendium of Natural Philosophy in five. He was not content to conduct his school at Kingswood according to the usual plans of education; he made it the scene of continual experimental improvements in methods of instruction as well as of discipline. In the latter he did not succeed; but in the former he anticipated important reforms, which were afterward completed by Bell, and which have emancipated academic studies from intolerable burdens and absurdities. He prepared for his school text-books remarkable for their simplicity and conciseness—English, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and French grammars, compendiums of Logic and Rhetoric, an English Dictionary, short Histories of England and Rome, expurgated editions of classic authors, selections from Corderius and Erasmus, and other works.

One of his most important schemes for the promotion of religious knowledge was his "Christian Library." He wished to meet by it a want of his preachers, but it was designed also for the people, and depended upon them for its support. It began in 1749, and continued through fifty volumes till 1755, at a loss of more than £200.* It consisted of abridgments of the choicest works of practical divinity, beginning with translations of the Apostolic Fathers. The entire work was reprinted 1819—26, in thirty octavo volumes.

A Methodist authority remarks, that the cheap and useful literature of subsequent times has been an imitation, designedly or not, of this extraordinary literary scheme of Wesley.† "Modern compilers," he justly adds, "have few difficulties to surmount. They can readily avail themselves of the improvements of science, and of that appetite for knowledge which is excited by the labours of the 'schoolmaster.' Wesley had to *create* that appetite, and he had to create it in a people deeply sunk in ignorance, and addicted to brutal habits. His 'Christian Library' was a noble effort to render available, to the spiritual interests of the people in general,

* [In December, 1752, Wesley writes that he had lost £200 by the publication; this was before he had completed it. Thirty years afterwards, in reply to a correspondent who wished him to re-publish it, he says, "I lost above *one* hundred pounds by it before, and cannot well afford to lose another hundred." —E. E.]

† Jackson's Preface to Wesley's Works, p. 15.

the scarce and valuable works of voluminous and learned authors."

So extensive did these publishing enterprises quickly become, that Wesley soon had his "own Book-room, and his own Printing-house."* These were not only the beginning of the modern Methodist "Book Concerns," but they formed the first Tract House; for from his press and his sales-room at the Foundry, as well as from other sources, were issued the publications with which the Tract Society, instituted in 1782, was supplied, and which were scattered by his preachers and people over the United Kingdom like the leaves of autumn. "Two-and-forty years ago," he writes, "having a desire to furnish poor people with cheaper, shorter, and plainer books than any I had seen, I wrote many small tracts, generally a penny a-piece; and afterward several larger. Some of these had such a sale as I never thought of; and by this means I unawares became rich." But these riches were all invested in his publishing house, or other schemes of popular usefulness, and he died, as he had promised, not leaving, apart from such public property, more than ten pounds for his funeral expenses.

Not content with book and tracts, Wesley projected in August, 1777, the Arminian Magazine, and issued the first number at the beginning of 1778. It was one of the first four religious magazines which sprang from the resuscitated religion of the age, and which began this species of periodical publications in the Protestant world.† Though nominally devoted to the defence of the Arminian theology, it was miscellaneous in its contents, and served not only for the promotion of religious literature, but of general intelligence. He conducted it till his death, and made faithful use of it for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. It is now the oldest religious periodical in the world. Its importance to the history of Methodism is inestimable; that history never could have been written had not Wesley published this repertory of its early biographies and correspondence. Each number contained a portrait‡ of one of his preachers or clerical

* Burkhard's Vollstandige Geschichte, chap. v.

† Southey's Wesley, chap. 26.

‡ [Portraits did not appear regularly in the early numbers of this Magazine, and those which were published often called forth expressions of disapproval from Wesley, being in many instances rather caricatures than otherwise. However, Wesley never was reduced to the expedients of his contemporary publishers, who, to save expense, often made one portrait with trifling alterations serve for half a dozen different public characters. All Wesley's portraits were undoubtedly original.—E. E.]

co-labourers, and its eighty volumes form a portrait gallery illustrative of the whole history of Methodism.

Such were some of Wesley's labours through the press for the elevation of the common people. He was the first to break down the barriers which high prices and elaborate style had thrown around the more important departments of knowledge, barring the masses from them. It has justly been said that he reduced many folios and quartos to pocket volumes;* he waded through the mass of the learned works of his day, and simplifying, multiplying, cheapening them, presented in the cottages and hovels of the poor almost every variety of useful or entertaining knowledge.† In addition to his own prose productions, constituting fourteen octavo volumes in the English edition and seven in the American, his "Notes" and abridgments make a catalogue of one hundred and nineteen prose works, (one of which, The Christian Library, contains fifty volumes,) fifty-two poetical publications by himself and his brother, and five distinct works on music. It may be questioned whether any English writer of the last or the present century has equalled him in the number of his productions.

Such a use of the press in our day by a single man, and he a hard-working clergyman, would be remarkable; in Wesley's day it was marvellous. It could not fail to be one of the greatest moral powers of his age. Nearly all his other labours promoted its influence among the people; his name on a book secured it attention among thousands; his daily travels and sermons attracted the popular mind with interest to his publications, and his preachers were active agents for their circulation in almost all parts of the kingdom, the United States, and the British American provinces. It was impossible that the mighty energies of the press could be thus put forth for more than half a century, among a population however depressed, without visible effect. Accordingly the change, the revolution it may be called, in the popular intelligence and literature, and in the general intellectual condition of the English race, which began in the last century, and is still rapidly advancing, will be found to have been coincident with these extraordinary labours. How far the one is attributable to the other, Methodist writers need not be anxious to determine; but it is due to historical

* Smith's History of Methodism, vol. i. p. 667. 1862.

† He even reproduced a novel for them, "Henry, Earl of Moreland," abridged from "The Fool of Quality," which Mr. Kingsley has thought worth editing in our times.

fidelity that they should point to the facts, and leave the world to judge of their relation as cause and effect.

The intellectual depression of the English masses in the early days of Wesley, was a necessary consequence of their moral degradation, so abundantly proved in these pages. The biographer of Wesley, whom the literary world has most readily accepted as authority, has given the deplorable evidence as decisively as any other writer.* He has acknowledged that "there never was less religious feeling either within the Establishment or without, than when Wesley blew his trumpet, and awakened those who slept."† The moral awakening which ensued could not possibly have continued, as it did, during more than half a century under Wesley's own labours, without an intellectual awakening also. The Establishment, with its learning, its opulence, and dignity, stooped to do little towards either; and the learned Priestley, a high authority respecting the one, if not the other, indignantly rebuked the Church, and commended Methodism as not only "Christianizing," but "civilizing that part of the community which is below the notice of your dignified clergy."‡ A literary authority has said: "It is in the rural districts, into which manufactories have spread—that are partly manufacturing and partly agricultural —that the population assumes its worst shape. . . . The Methodists have done much to check the progress of demoralization in these districts. They have given vast numbers education; they have taken them away from the pot-house and the gambling-house; from low haunts and low pursuits. They have placed them in a certain circle, and invested them with a degree of moral and social importance. They have placed them where they have a character to sustain, and higher objects to strive after; where they have ceased to be operated upon by a perpetual series of evil influences, and have been brought under the regular operation of good ones. They have rescued them from brutality of mind and manners, and given them a more refined association on earth, and a warm hope of a still better existence hereafter. If they have not done all that could be desired with such materials, they have done much, and the country owes them much."§

A traveller half a century ago, describing with grateful surprise the moral revolution which had taken place in the West of England,

* Robert Southey, Life of Wesley, chap. 9.
† See his Prospects and Progress of Society, vol. ii. p. 54.
‡ Priestley's Letter to Burke, p. 89.
§ Howitt's Rural Life of England, vol. i. p. 258. London, 1838.

asks: "Who have been the immediate instruments of so much good in a district so unlikely to exhibit such gratifying appearances? I feel that I am but doing justice to a class of people much, though undeservedly, calumniated when I answer, The Wesleyan Methodists. With a zeal that ought to put to the blush men of higher pretensions, these indefatigable servants of their Master have penetrated into the wilds of the mines, and, unappalled by danger or difficulty, careless of abuse or derision, and inflexible in the good work they had undertaken, they have perseveringly taught, gradually reclaimed, and at length, I may almost venture to say, completely reformed, a large body of men who, without their exertions, would probably still have been immersed in the deepest spiritual darkness and grossest moral turpitude."*

No other nation, perhaps, has ever exhibited such a simultaneous moral and intellectual awakening as the English people passed through, during the extraordinary religious and literary labours of Methodism in the eighteenth century.

A deistical authority assures us, though attributing the fact to a false cause, that "meantime an immense change had begun, not only among speculative minds, but also among the people themselves;" and that "one of the leading characteristics of the eighteenth century, and one that pre-eminently distinguishes it from all that preceded, was a craving after knowledge on the part of those classes from whom knowledge had hitherto been shut out."† It was then that Sunday schools arose to supply in part this craving, and no man promoted them more than Wesley.‡ The spread of books created an appetite for them which the wages of the people could not supply, and circulating libraries sprang up. Franklin found not one of these convenient provisions in London in 1725.§ Southey says that the first in the metropolis was begun about the middle of the century.‖ The first in Birmingham was opened in 1751;¶ but so fast did they multiply, that before long they

* A Tour through Cornwall, in 1808, by Rev. Richard Warner, of Bath, pp. 301, 302.

† Buckle's History of Civilization, vol. i. chap. 7.

‡ Contemporary authorities show that the national clergy were generally opposed to Sunday schools. Compare Spencer's Social Statics, p. 343, with Watson's Observations on Southey, p. 149.

§ Life of himself, vol. i. p. 64.

‖ The Doctor, edited by Warter, p. 271. [One of the earliest in London was in existence in 1745, and was called "The Gentlemen and Ladies' Growing and Circulating Library." It was in Crane Court, Fleet Street, and the terms were twelvepence per quarter.—E. E.]

¶ Hutton's Life of himself, p. 279.

attracted the attention of politicians as desirable sources of revenue by taxation.* The printing-press, hitherto almost confined to the metropolis, began to appear in the country towns. As late as 1714 there were no printers in Chester, Whitehaven, Preston, Kendal, Leeds, Manchester, or Liverpool. † In 1749 we hear of a printer in Birmingham, but in the reign of Anne there was not one there. ‡ In 1780 there was "scarcely a bookseller" in all Cornwall; § Wesley's publications were among the first to rouse the intellect of the common people of that county. The first press in Whitby was set up in 1770. Before Wesley died, the printing-press was doing its enlightening work in most of the important places of the kingdom. In the eighteenth century were also made the first systematic efforts to popularize the sciences, by the publication of treatises upon them in a simple and untechnical style, || and Wesley shared in the task by his Compendium of Natural Philosophy ¶ and other works. The people began to unite in societies for the purchase of books, and before the end of the century reading-clubs began to appear among them. It has been ascertained that "the marked increase" in the number and variety of books occurred during the last half of the century, especially from 1756; and that from 1753 to 1792 the newspapers of the country more than doubled their circulation.** "In every department the same eager curiosity was shown."†† The impulse given to the popular mind bore it onward in a manner unknown before; the people roused themselves for a new career. Debating societies were formed among them in the middle of the century; loftier designs were soon exhibited, and in 1769 Englishmen met publicly, for the first time in their history, to enlighten one another respecting their political rights. ‡‡ In fine, the trumpets

* [Indeed they increased so rapidly, that some wise men proposed to tax them "by a licence, at the rate of 2s. 6d. per 100 volumes per annum."—Sinclair's *Hist. of the Revenue*, vol. iii. p. 268.—E. E.]

† Life of Gent, the printer, by himself, p. 20, 1832.

‡ Southey's Common-place Book, First Series, p. 568.

§ Life of Samuel Drew. By his Son, 1834.

|| Buckle's History of Civilization, vol. i. chap. 7, pp. 40, 41.

¶ First published in two, afterwards enlarged to five volumes, 12mo.

** Buckle, chap. 7, and Hunt's History of Newspapers, vol. i. p. 252.

†† Buckle, chap. 7.

‡‡ Ibid. "Public meetings . . . through which the people might declare their newly-acquired consciousness of power . . . cannot be distinctly traced higher than the year 1769, but they were now (1770) of daily occurrence."—Cooke's History of Party, vol. iii. p. 187.

of a grand moral and intellectual resurrection had sounded through the realm; the masses were rising from the dead; and who, during this century, had uttered to them more awakening blasts than George Whitefield, John Wesley, and their hundreds of heroic evangelists? Above all, it was in this uprising of the popular intellect that the responsibility of the people for religious questions and interests became a matter of general consciousness—a fact which has since been revolutionizing the Protestant world, and to which the example of Wesley's societies, and especially of his lay ministry, could not fail to contribute. A high living authority testifies, that "neither the attacks on our religion, nor the evidences in its support, were to any great extent brought forward in a popular form till near the close of the last century. On both sides, the learned (or those who professed to be such) seem to have agreed in this—that the mass of the people were to acquiesce in the decision of their superiors, and neither should nor could exercise their own minds on the question." *

It is admitted also, that with these extraordinary popular changes the condition of literary men was revolutionized. A vast popular market was opened for them. They ceased to be dependent upon rich or titled patronage. Their old obsequious Dedication passed away. † They assumed a more popular style, and became more genuine, both as men and as authors, by the change. They were also morally emancipated; dependence upon the powerful or rich few, with its natural tendencies to servility, to prejudice against the popular interests, and in favour of the vices of the great, gave way to independence, to an appeal to the millions; and the millions have not failed to respond, and to give to genius a recognition and a patronage which has rendered authorship a power supreme over senates and thrones.

Such are some of the coincident facts of the Methodistic, and of the intellectual and social history of England in the last century.

The great man who was despised by priests and caricatured by prelates, ‡ while he was doing more than all of them for the redemption of their Church; who was satirized by authors while

* Archbishop Whateley's Dangers to Christian Faith, pp. 76, 77.

† "About the middle of the eighteenth century was the turning-point of this deplorable condition; and Watson, for instance, in 1769, laid it down as a rule, 'never to dedicate to those from whom I expected favours.' So, too, Warburton in 1758 boasts that his dedication was not, as usual, 'occupied by trifles and falsehoods.'"—Buckle, chap. 7.

‡ See the instances of Warburton and Lavington.

helping so effectually to break open a way for them, from the slavery of aristocratic patronage, to the sympathies and patronage of the awakened people; who was assailed by mobs while labouring and sacrificing himself, as no other man of modern ages has done, for the welfare of themselves and their children—John Wesley thus lived and laboured, the truest and most manifest man of England, during the whole of these great changes; and the history which ignores his agency in them will, if not in this generation, yet in another, be pronounced a literary imposture, an historical lie, by the general voice of humanity.*

The attempt of sceptical or philosophical writers to trace these grand improvements to purely social or accidental causes, cannot stand the test of historical examination. Christianity claims them, as she does most of the beneficial changes of modern civilization. The cross stands out aloft and radiant amid the receding clouds, and the world beholds beneath it the thousands of reclaimed poor, gazing at it with care-worn but upturned brows, and pointing to it with labour-worn, but uplifted hands, as the emblem of all human hope for both worlds.

And the philosophic eye, touched with the divine light of the vision, may read still upon the never-failing symbol the ancient inscription, *In hoc signo vinces*—Under this sign shalt thou conquer!

Such is the ultimate lesson with which the curtain falls upon this second act in the extraordinary drama of the Religious Movement of the eighteenth century, called Methodism.

* Macaulay expresses contempt for "some writers of books called Histories of England under the reign of George II., in which the rise of Methodism is not mentioned," and says that in a hundred years "such a breed of authors will be extinct." Lord Russell (Mems. of Affairs of Europe from the Peace of Utrecht) and Lord Mahon (Hist. of England, vol. ii.) have given considerable attention to the subject, but their eulogies are characterized by the usual invidiousness of Churchmen.

APPENDIX.

[*A.*]

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF "THE MINUTE CONTROVERSY."

(*See pages* 386—410.)

1. Minutes of some late Conversations between the Rev. John and Charles Wesley, and others [at a Conference commenced in London, on Tuesday, August 7, 1770]. 12mo, Bristol, 1770. The passage objected to was extracted and published in the Gospel Magazine, May 1771.
2. Circular issued by the Countess of Huntingdon, signed by the Hon. and Rev. W. Shirley, inviting clergymen and laymen to attend Wesley's Conference in 1771, and demand the recantation of the objectionable Minute [reprinted in Gospel Magazine, 1771, and in Fletcher's Vindication].
3. A Comment or Paraphrase on the Extract from the Minutes of the Rev. Mr. Wesley, &c., in Gospel Magazine, June 1771, pp. 260-271.
4. Thoughts [Poetical] on reading the sad account of Mr. Wesley's Apostasy from the genuine faith of the Gospel. London, June 17, 1771, signed Cleon, printed in Gospel Magazine, August, 1771, pp. 369-70.
5. A Printed Circular Letter, dated July 2, 1771, issued from Bristol [denouncing Wesley's opponents, as persecuting, vindictive, blood-thirsty monsters, under the influence of Satan].
6. Defence of the "Minutes," by John Wesley, printed in Ireland, July 10, 1771, for "Private Circulation;" never republished.
7. Declaration agreed to by the Rev. John Wesley and Fifty-three of his Preachers, at the Conference commenced in Bristol, Tuesday, August 6, 1771; first published in a Narrative, &c., by the Rev. Mr. Shirley; reprinted in "Conversation between R. Hill, Esq., &c.," in Watson's Life of Wesley, &c.
8. A Vindication of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Last Minutes, occasioned by a circular printed letter, inviting such principal persons, both clergy and laity, as well of the Dissenters as of the Established Church, who disapprove of those Minutes, to oppose them in a body as a dreadful heresy: and designed to remove prejudice, check abuses, defend the character of an eminent minister of Christ, and prevent some important scriptural truths from being hastily branded as heretical, and stem the torrent of Antinomianism; in five letters to the hon. and reverend author of the Circular Letter. By a lover of quietness and liberty of conscience [Rev. John Fletcher]. Letters dated July 29, 1771, and signed J. F., not published till the latter end of August. 12mo, Bristol, 1771.
9. A Narrative of the principal circumstances relative to the Rev. Mr. Wesley's late Conference, held at Bristol, August 9, 1771, at which the Rev. Mr. Shirley and others, his friends, were present: with the Declaration then agreed to by Mr. Wesley and Fifty-three of the preachers in connexion with him. By the Rev. Mr. Shirley. 8vo, Bath, 1771.
10. Letter signed "Simplex," on Mr. Wesley's Declaration. In Gospel Magazine. September, 1771, pp. 388-9.
11. Five Letters to the Rev. Mr. F——r, relating to his Vindication of the "Minutes" of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, intended for the comfort of mourning backsliders, and such as may have been distressed and perplexed by reading Mr. Wesley's Minutes, or the Vindication of them, by the author of "Pietas Oxoniensis" [Sir Richard Hill]. 8vo, London, 1771. A Second Edition, with considerable additions, was published early in 1772.
12. A Conversation between Richard Hill, Esq., the Rev. Mr. Madan, and the Superior of a Convent of English Bene-

dictine Monks at Paris, held at the said Convent, July 13, 1771, in the presence of Thomas Powis, Esq., and others, relative to some doctrinal Minutes advanced by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley and others, at a Conference held in London, August 7, 1770. To which are added some Remarks by the Editor, and the Minutes themselves prefixed, as also Mr. Wesley's own Declaration concerning his Minutes, versified by another hand. 12mo, London, 1771.

13. An Answer to some Capital Errors contained in Minutes of some late Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and others, printed at Bristol, 1770. By John Wesley, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. Also, the Spirit and Meaning of a late Declaration, versified by the Editor. 12mo, London, 1771.

A cleverly written *jeu d'e prit*, in which the "Declaration" was thus versified:—

Whereas the religion and fate of THREE NATIONS
Depend on the *important* one of our CONVERSATIONS;
Where in some objections are thrown in our way,
And words have been construed to *mean* what they say;
Be it known from henceforth, to each friend and each brother,
Whene'er we *say* one thing, we *mean* quite *another*.

14. A Second Check to Antinomianism, occasioned by a late Narrative in Three Letters to the Hon. and Rev. Author, by the Vindicator of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Minutes [Preface dated Madeley, September 11, 1771]. 12mo, London, 1771.

15. More Work for Mr. John Wesley; or a Vindication of the Decrees and Providence of God from the defamation of a late printed paper entitled "The Consequence Proved." By Augustus Toplady [Preface dated Broad Hembury, November 28, 1771].

This incidentally refers to this "Controversy," but really had its origin in another, arising out of Toplady's Translation of Zanchius on Predestination. Toplady's language throughout had been so wanting in Christian and gentlemanly feeling, that Wesley had disdained to reply. Walter Sellon and Thomas Olivers, however, had met Toplady on his own ground, and there was no sparing of hard words. Sir R. Hill, in his parting letter to Fletcher, highly commended this work, and hence Fletcher deemed it necessary to answer it. See No. 38 in this list.

16. A Review of all the Doctrines taught by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, containing a full and particular answer to a book entitled "A Second Check to Antinomianism," in Six Letters to the Rev. Mr. F——r, wherein the doctrines of a twofold justification, free-will, man's merit, sinless perfection, finished salvation, and real Antinomianism, are particularly discussed; and the Puritan divines and Protestant churches vindicated from the charges brought against them of holding Mr. Wesley's doctrines. To which is added, a Farrago [of hot and cold medicines, by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, extracted from his own publications]. By the author of "Pietas Oxoniensis." 8vo, London, 1772.

The Second Edition [158 pp. 8vo, London, 1772] was corrected and enlarged, and had the "Remarks on the Third Check," [16 pp.] added.

17. A Third Check to Antinomianism, in a letter to the author of "Pietas Oxoniensis," by the Vindicator of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Minutes [dated Madeley, February, 3, 1772]. 12mo, Bristol, 1772.

18. Friendly Remarks occasioned by the spirit and doctrines contained in the Rev. Mr. Fletcher's Vindication, and more particularly in his "Second Check to Antinomianism." To which is added a postscript, occasioned by his "Third Check," in a letter to the author. By * * * * A.M. [Rowland Hill]. 71 pp. 8vo, London, 1772.

19. Some Remarks on Mr. Hill's "Review of all the Doctrines Taught by John Wesley" [dated Bristol, September, 9 1772]. By John Wesley. 12mo, Bristol, 1772.

20. Some Remarks on a Pamphlet entitled "A Third Check to Antinomianism," by the author of "Pietas Oxoniensis." 16 pp. 8vo, London, 1772.

21. Logica Genevensis; or, a Fourth Check to Antinomianism, in which St. James' pure religion is defended against the charges, and established upon the concessions of Mr. Richard and Mr. Rowland Hill, in a series of letters to those gentlemen. By the Vindicator of the Minutes. [Madeley, November 15, 1772.] 12mo, Bristol, 1772.

22. Logica Wesleiensis; or, the Farrago Double-distilled, with an heroic Poem in praise of Mr. John Wesley. By the author of "Pietas Oxoniensis" 8vo, 1773.

23. The Finishing Stroke; containing some Strictures on the Rev. Mr. Fletcher's Pamphlet, entitled "Logica Genevensis," or a Fourth Check to Antinomianism. By Richard Hill, Esq [January 2, 1773]. 53 pp. 8vo, London, 1773.

24. Some Remarks on Mr. Hill's Farrago Double-distilled [Bristol, March 14, 1773]. By John Wesley. 12mo, London, 1773.

25. Dr. Crisp's Ghost; or, a Check upon Checks. 12mo, 1773.

26. The Christian World Unmasked: Pray, Come and Peep. By John Berridge, A.M., Vicar of Everton, Bedfordshire. 229 pp. 8vo, London, 1773.

This good but eccentric man had started in his ministerial life as a decided Arminian; his opinions, however, had been gradually veering towards Calvinism, and he caused a hymn-book, which he had issued, and which contained many of Charles Wesley's choicest hymns, to be suppressed, because, as he expressed it, "many of the bells had been cast in a celebrated foundery, and in ringing were tuneable enough, none more so, but a clear gospel tone was not found in them all." Before his death he seems to have moderated his Calvinism, and to have cordially detested the very name of controversy.

The first edition of "The Christian World Unmasked," has this peculiarity, which, I believe, has not been previously noted—it very decidedly maintains the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration. "I believe," he writes, "as was anciently taught, that baptismal water, through the grace of Christ, does wash away the guilt of original or birth sin; and that baptized children, who die before they can discern between good and evil, and, of course, are not guilty of *actual* sin, will be saved; but that children dying unbaptized are left to God's uncovenanted mercy, and what that is no man can tell," p. 224. In all the later editions this passage was omitted.

27. Logica Genevensis, continued: or, the First Part of a Fifth Check to Antinomianism, containing an Answer to "The Finishing Stroke" of Richard Hill, Esq., in which some Remarks upon Mr. Fulsome's Antinomian creed, published by the Rev. Mr. Berridge, are occasionally introduced. With an Appendix upon the Remaining Difference between the Calvinists and Anti-Calvinists, with respect to our Lord's doctrine of Justification by Works, and St. James's doctrine of Justification by Works, and not by Faith only. [Madeley, September 13, 1773.] 12mo, London, 1773.

28. A Scourge to Calumny, in Two Parts, inscribed to Richard Hill, Esq. I. Demonstrating the Absurdity of that Gentleman's "Farrago." II. Containing a full Answer to all that is printed in his "Farrago Double-distilled." By Thomas Olivers. 12mo, London, 1774.

29. Logica Genevensis, continued: or, the Second Part of the Fifth Check to Antinomianism; containing a Defence of "Jack o' Lantern" and "The Paper Kite," that is, sincere obedience, of "The Cobweb," that is, the Evangelical law of liberty, and of the "Valiant Sergeant if," that is, the conditionality of perseverance, attacked by the Rev. Mr. Berridge, M.A., Vicar of Everton, and late Fellow of Clare Hall, Cambridge, in his book called "The Christian World Unmasked." 12mo, 1774.

30. The First Part of an Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism; containing—I. An Historical Essay on the danger of parting Faith and Works. II. Salvation by the Covenant of Grace, a Discourse preached in the parish church of Madeley, April 18, 1762, and May 9, 1773. III. A Scriptural Essay on the astonishing rewardableness of Works according to the Covenant of Grace. IV. An Essay on Truth; or, a Rational Vindication of the Doctrine of Salvation by Faith, with a dedicatory Epistle to the Countess of Huntingdon [March, 12, 1774]. Preface dated Madeley, May 21, 1774. 12mo, Shrewsbury, 1774, and Bristol, 1774.

31. A Faithful Warning to the Followers of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley; shewing the falsehood, calumny, &c., made use of in that gentleman's Societies, to deceive the ignorant and unwary in the Things of God. 12mo, London, Keith, 1774.

32. Historic Proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England. By A. Toplady. 2 vols. 8vo, London, 1774.

33. Three Letters, written by Richard Hill, Esq., to Rev. J. Fletcher, in 1773, setting forth Mr. Hill's reasons for declining any further controversy relative to Mr. Wesley's principles [with a Creed for Arminians and Perfectionists]. 8vo, 1774.

34. Zelotes and Honestus Reconciled; or, the Second Part of an Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism, being the First Part of "The Scripture Scales to Weigh the Gold of Gospel Truth, to Balance a Multitude of Opposite Scriptures, to Prove the Gospel Marriage of Free Grace and Free Will, and Restore Primitive Harmony to the Gospel of the day; with a Preface, containing some Strictures upon the Three Letters of Richard Hill, Esq., which have been lately published. By a Lover of the Truth as it is in Jesus [J. Fletcher]. 12mo, Shrewsbury, 1774.

35. The Fictitious and the Genuine Creed: being "A Creed for Arminians," composed by Richard Hill, Esq.; to which is opposed a Creed for those who believe that Christ tasted death for every man. By the author of the "Checks to Antinomianism" [Madeley, December 14, 1774]. 32 pp. 12mo, London, 1775.

36. Zelotes and Honestus Reconciled; or, the Third Part of an Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism, being the

Second Part of the Scripture Scales, &c. [Madeley, March 30, 1775]. 12mo, Shrewsbury, 1775.

37 A Letter to Richard Hill, Esq., containing some remarks on that gentleman's five letters to the Rev. J. Fletcher. By J. M. 42 pp. 12mo, Bristol, 1775.

Probably written by John Murlin, a Methodist preacher. R. Hill, Esq., had charged Wesley with contradiction, and had quoted from Wesley's writings extending over nearly forty years to prove it; the writer of this tract retorts by showing ten contradictions in Hill's own pamphlet.

38. The Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity, asserted in opposition to Mr. John Wesley's Tract on that subject. By A. Toplady [Broad Hembury, January 22, 1775]. 8vo, London, 1775.

39. An Answer to the Rev. Mr. Toplady's "Vindication of the Decrees," &c. By the author of "The Checks" [Madeley, October, 1775]. V., and 128 pp. 12mo, London, 1776.

40. The Doctrines of Grace and Justice equally essential to the pure Gospel; with some remarks on the mischievous divisions caused among Christians by parting these doctrines; being an Introduction to a plan of reconciliation between the defenders of the doctrine of partial grace, commonly called *Calvinists*, and the defenders of the doctrine of impartial justice, commonly called *Arminians*. By John Fletcher. 39 pp. 12mo, London, 1777.

41. The Reconciliation; or an Easy Method to Unite the Professing People of God by placing the Doctrines of Grace and Justice in such a light as to make the Candid Arminians, Bible Calvinists; and the Candid Calvinists, Bible Arminians. Dedicated to James Ireland, Esq. of Brislington near Bristol [Newington, April 16, 1777], with Bible Arminianism and Bible Calvinism. By John Fletcher. 28, 29, and 84 pp. 12mo, London, 1777.

Fletcher concludes this with a hope that both Calvinists and Arminians may soon sing in unison,

> "Love like death has all destroy'd,
> Render'd all distinctions void;
> Names and Sects and parties fall,
> Thou, O Christ, art all in all!"

42. A Reply to the Principal Arguments by which the Calvinists and the Fatalists support the Doctrine of Absolute Necessity, being Remarks on the Rev. Mr. Toplady's Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity. By John Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley. 80 pp. 12mo, London, 1777.

43. The Last Check to Antinomianism; a Polemical Essay on the Twin Doctrines of Christian Imperfection, and a Death Purgatory. By the author of "The Checks."

Hervey's "Letters to Wesley," Toplady's "Letters on the Abridgment of Zanchius on Predestination," Walter Sellon's "Church of England Vindicated from the charge of Absolute Predestination," and Thomas Olivers' "Letter to Toplady," were all written prior to the commencement of "The Minute" Controversy; but, dealing with the same topics, they were constantly referred to by the contending parties.

[*B.*]

SOUTHEY'S LETTER ON WESLEY.

(*See page* 682.)

KESWICK, 17*th Aug.*, 1835.

DEAR SIR,—I am much obliged to you for your letter, and for your kind offer to lend me such books as may render my Life of Wesley less incomplete. The edition of his Works (1809–13) in seventeen volumes (that one containing only the Index included) I have. I will therefore only trouble you for those volumes of the new edition that contain Mr. Benson's life and the additional letters, and also for Beal's early history of the Wesleys, which I had never before heard of. Adam Clarke's Memoirs of the Family I have, and mean to make use of it. Indeed, if you tell me, when you have inspected his additional matter, that his second volume will in your opinion be worth waiting for, I shall much rather wait for it than lose the opportunity of making

my new edition as correct as I can. My intention is to incorporate in it whatever new information has been brought forward by subsequent biographers, and, of course, to correct every error that has been pointed out, or that I myself can discover. Mr. Alexander Knox has convinced me that I was mistaken in supposing ambition entered largely into Mr. Wesley's actuating impulses. Upon this subject he wrote a long and most admirable paper, and gave me permission to affix it to my own work whenever it might be reprinted. This I shall do, and make such alterations in the book as are required in consequence. The Wesleyan leaders never committed a greater mistake than when they treated me as an enemy. . . . I shall be greatly obliged to you for any documents with which you can supply me. I have some interesting matter (direct and collateral) to add, nothing, I think, material to alter, except on the one point upon which I had judged injuriously of Mr. Wesley. But my work will not be the more palatable on this account to those who have declared war against it. Farewell, dear sir, and believe me, with many thanks and with sincere respect,—Yours very truly,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

To JAMES NICHOLS, Esq., 46 Hoxton Square.

[C.]

JOHN WESLEY AND GRACE MURRAY.

(*See page* 687.)

"The person on whom Mr. Wesley's affections were placed was in every respect worthy of them. From documents now before me, I am enabled to give a short account of this very interesting attachment and of its failure, so very painful to Mr. Wesley.

"Miss Grace Norman, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, was married at a very early age to Mr. Alexander Murray, of a respectable family in Scotland. . . . He was an affectionate husband, and his kind attentions were repaid by the affectionate attachment of his wife; but they were both, at that time, totally insensible to the happiness of religion, Mrs. Murray having departed from the God of her early youth. After some time she was awakened by the powerful preaching of that day, and immediately began to fulfil her baptismal vow. She renounced the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, in which they had both delighted, and became the devoted servant of the Lord that bought her This change gave her husband great pain, and for some time she suffered a degree of real persecution from him. He even threatened to confine her in a madhouse. Her gentle and affectionate behaviour in some measure overcame this evil; but his death at sea, which happened not long after, almost overwhelmed her. She was, however, strengthened by divine grace to submit to this afflictive bereavement, and it was sanctified, in a remarkable manner, to her *furtherance and growth in grace*.

"After the death of her husband, Mrs. Murray returned to Newcastle; and when Mr. Wesley formed a family connected with his chapel in that town, he appointed her to be the housekeeper. Mr. Wesley had three houses which he accounted *his own*, one at London, another at Bristol, and a third at

Newcastle; to all others he had only the power to appoint the preachers. These houses might be called *Religious Houses;* the housekeepers were persons eminent for piety. The itinerant preachers in the western, northern, and middle counties occasionally visited these establishments, and rested for a short space from their great labour.

"Mrs. Murray had now full employment in that way in which she delighted. In the town and in the country societies her labours of love, especially among the females, were remarkably owned of the Lord, and highly edifying. Mr. Wesley then enlarged her sphere, and she travelled through the northern counties to meet and regulate the female classes. She then, under his direction, visited Ireland, where she abounded in the same work of faith and love for several months; and, though she never attempted to preach, her gifts were much honoured, and her '*name as ointment poured forth.*' She returned by Bristol, and visited the societies in the southern and eastern counties, and rested again at Newcastle.

"Mr. Wesley, who knew all her proceedings, and greatly esteemed her labours, thought he had found a help meet for him. But while he indulged these pleasing prospects, in which he was encouraged by his highly-valued friend, the Vicar of Shoreham, and others, they were dashed to pieces by the intelligence of Mrs. Murray's marriage, on the third day of October, 1749, at Newcastle, to Mr. John Bennet, one of the itinerant preachers, in the presence of Mr. C. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield!

"A son, the fruit of this marriage, and who became a Dissenting minister, published a short memoir of his pious mother after her death, in which he informs his readers that his father, when on a visit to the house at Newcastle, was seized with a violent fever; and that, when all his friends despaired of his life, he was, as he always declared, given back to them in answer to the prayers of Mrs. Murray. From that period he thought, as his son informs us, that 'she was given to him for a wife, although he did not declare this for a long time after.'

"I cannot at this distance of time fully state the causes of this strange interference, especially as, contrary to his usual freedom, I do not remember ever to have heard Mr. Wesley mention the event. The high character of those concerned forbids the imputation of any corrupt motive.

"The disappointment was a most severe one to Mr. Wesley, and perhaps the forgiveness and love which he manifested on that occasion, was the highest proof of the power of the religion he possessed that he was ever called to exercise toward man. He continued to employ Mr. Bennet as before, and behaved to him with his usual kindness. That gentleman, however, became still more intimate with Mr. Whitefield, adopted his sentiments, and at length publicly separated from Mr. Wesley at Bolton, in Lancashire, on April 3rd, 1752. He afterwards settled as a Dissenting minister at Warburton, in Cheshire, where he died on the 24th of May, 1759.

"There is now lying before me a copy of verses by Mr. Wesley, never yet published, which will fully warrant all I have said concerning this painful event. He seems to have written to ease his bleeding heart. The public life which his high calling obliged him to adopt, caused him generally to restrain the feelings of one of the kindest hearts that ever man was blessed with. But in these verses we see that warm and tender nature breathe itself forth without restraint, except from submission to God; a point of religion which he ever inculcated as the highest fruit of grace."

REFLECTIONS UPON PAST PROVIDENCES.

OCTOBER, 1749.

O LORD, I bow my sinful head!
Righteous are all thy ways with man;
Yet suffer me with thee to plead,
With lowly rev'rence to complain;
With deep unutter'd grief to groan,
"O what is this that thou hast done?"

Oft, as through giddy youth I roved,
And danced along the flow'ry way,
By chance or thoughtless passion moved,
An easy, unresisting prey
I fell, while love's envenom'd dart
Thrill'd through my nerves and tore my heart,

At length, by sad experience taught,
Firm I shook off the abject yoke;
Abhorr'd his sweetly-pois'nous draught,
Through all his wily fetters broke;
Fix'd my desires on things above,
And languish'd for celestial love!

Borne on the wings of sacred hope,
Long had I soar'd, and spurn'd the ground,
When, panting for the mountain-top,
My soul a kindred spirit found,
By Heaven intrusted to my care,
The daughter of my faith and prayer.

In early dawn of life, serene,
Mild, sweet, and tender was her mood!
Her pleasing form spoke all within
Soft and compassionately good;
List'ning to every wretch's care,
Mingling with each her friendly tear.

In dawn of life, to feed the poor,
Glad she her little all bestow'd;
Wise to lay up a better store,
And hast'ning to be rich in God;
God whom she sought with early care,
With reverence, and with lowly fear.

Ere twice four years pass'd o'er her head,
Her infant mind with love he fill'd;
His gracious, glorious, name reveal'd,
And sweetly forced her heart to yield;
She groan'd t' ascend Heaven's high abode,
To die into the arms of God!

Yet, warm with youth and beauty's pride,
Soon was her heedless soul betray'd;
From heaven her footsteps turn'd aside,
O'er pleasure's flow'ry plain she stray'd;
Fondly the toys of earth she sought,
And God was not in all her thought.

Not long—a messenger she saw,
Sent forth glad tidings to proclaim;
She heard, with joy and wond'ring awe,
His cry, "Sinners, behold the Lamb!"
His eye her inmost nature shook,
His word her heart in pieces broke.

Her bosom heaved with lab'ring sighs,
And groan'd th' unutterable prayer;
As rivers from her streaming eyes,
Fast flow'd the never-ceasing tear,
Till Jesus spake—"Thy mourning's o'er,
Believe, rejoice, and weep no more!"

She heard; pure love her soul o'erflow'd;
Sorrow and sighing fled away;
With sacred zeal her spirit glow'd,
Panting His every word t' obey;
Her faith by plenteous fruit she show'd,
And all her works were wrought in God.

Nor works alone her faith approved;
Soon in affliction's furnace tried,
By him whom next to Heaven she loved,
As silver seven times purified,
Shone midst the flames her constant mind,
Emerged, and left the dross behind.

When death, in freshest strength of years,
Her much-loved friend tore from her breast,
Awhile she pour'd her plaints and tears,
But, quickly turning to her rest,
"Thy will be done!" she meekly cried,
"Suffice, for me the Saviour died!"

When first I view'd, with fix'd regard,
Her artless tears in silence flow,
"For thee are better things prepared,"
I said, "Go forth, with Jesus go!
My Master's peace be on thy soul,
Till perfect love shall make thee whole!"

I saw her run, with wingèd speed,
In works of faith and lab'ring love!
I saw her glorious toil succeed,
And showers of blessings from above
Crowning her warm effectual prayer,
And glorified my God in her,

Yet while to all her tender mind
In streams of pure affection flow'd,
To one by ties peculiar join'd,
One, only less beloved than God,
"Myself," she said, "my soul I owe,—
My guardian angel here below!"

From heaven the grateful ardour came,
Pure from the dross of low desire;
Well-pleased I mark'd the guiltless flame,
Nor dared to damp the sacred fire,
Heaven's choicest gift on man bestow'd,
Strength'ning our hearts and hands in God.

'Twas now I bow'd my aching head,
While sickness shook the house of clay;
Duteous she ran with humble speed,
Love's tend'rest offices to pay,
To ease my pain, to sooth my care,
T' uphold my feeble hands in prayer.

Amazed I cried, "Surely for me
A help prepared of Heaven thou art!
Thankful I take the gift from Thee,
O Lord! and nought on earth shall part
The souls that thou hast join'd above,
In lasting bonds of sacred love."

Abash'd she spoke: "O what is this?
Far above all my boldest hope!
Can God, beyond my utmost wish,
Thus lift his worthless handmaid up?
This only could my soul desire!
This only had I dared require!"

From that glad hour, with growing love,
Heaven's latest, dearest gift I view'd;
While, pleased each moment to improve,
We urged our way with strength renew'd,
Our one desire, our common aim,
T' extol our gracious Master's name.

Companions now in weal and woe,
No power on earth could us divide;
Nor summer's heat nor winter's snow
Could tear my partner from my side;
Nor toils, nor weariness, nor pain,
Nor horrors of the angry main.

Oft, (though as yet the nuptial tie
Was not, clasping her hand in mine,
"What force," she said, "beneath the sky,
Can now our well-knit souls disjoin?
With thee I'd go to India's coast,
To worlds in distant oceans lost!"

Such was the friend, than life more dear,
Whom in one luckless, baleful hour,
(For ever mention'd with a tear!)
The tempest's unresisted power
(O the unutterable smart!)
Tore from my inly-bleeding heart!

Unsearchable thy judgments are,
O Lord! a bottomless abyss!
Yet sure thy love, thy guardian care,
O'er all thy works extended is!
O why didst thou the blessing send!
Or why thus snatch away my friend?

What Thou hast done I know not now;
Suffice, I shall hereafter know!
Beneath thy chast'ning hand I bow;
That still I live to thee I owe.
O teach thy deeply humbled son,
Father! to say, "Thy will be done!"

Teach me from every pleasing snare
To keep the issues of my heart;
Be thou, my love, my joy, my fear!
Thou my eternal portion art!
Be thou my never-failing friend,
And love, O love me to the end!

"In the year 1788, the son of Mr. Bennet, already mentioned, officiated at a chapel on the Pavement in Moorfields, and his mother came to London in that year on a visit to him. Mr. Thomas Olivers, having seen her, mentioned the circumstance to Mr. Wesley when I was with him, and intimated that Mrs. Bennet wished to see him. Mr. Wesley, with evident feeling, resolved to visit her; and the next morning he took me with him to Colebrook Row, where her son then resided. The meeting was affecting; but Mr. Wesley preserved more than his usual self-possession. It was easy to see, notwithstanding the many years that had intervened, that both in sweetness of spirit, and in person and manners, she was a fit subject for the tender regrets expressed in those verses which I have presented to the reader. The interview did not continue long, and I do not remember that I ever heard Mr. Wesley mention her name afterwards.

"Some years after the death of her husband, Mrs. Bennet removed to Chapel-en-le-Frith, where she again joined the Methodist society, and, according to her first faith and practice, she abounded in those works of piety and mercy which distinguished her early days. She lived twelve years after the death of Mr. Wesley, and entered into the joy of her Lord, February the 23rd, 1803, in the eighty-fifth year of her age."—*Moore's Life of Wesley*, book vi. chap. 3.

[It is this incident which forms the substance of the pamphlet published in 1848, entitled, "Narrative of a Remarkable Transaction in the Early Life of John Wesley, from an Original MS. in his own Handwriting, never before Published." It consists of a series of extracts from Wesley's journals, strung together by observations which, in many cases, distort their obvious meaning, and of the poem given above. The version of the poem has some slight variations: and has between the 14th and 15th stanzas, four referring to Grace Murray's despondency, which are not included in the version just given. The MS. is in the library of the British Museum, but it is *not* in the handwriting of Wesley. Its history shows that it came from the family of Mrs. Wesley, and there can be little doubt that it was written by an enemy, probably to foster Mrs. Wesley's well-known jealous feelings. A second edition of this pamphlet was issued in 1862, with an appendix containing a review of the work, by the late Rev. J. Hunter; this review is neither creditable to the head nor heart of that well-known antiquary, and we feel certain was never meant for publication. Instead of censuring the issue of a scandalous production like this, which the whole history of Wesley's career gives the lie to, he actually by summarizing gives increased currency to the slander upon Wesley's honour and purity. Had he meant it for publication, he would surely have taken the pains to ascertain whether anything in the history of Wesley, whose whole life was open to public inspection for more than half a century, could justify imputations which his bitterest enemies in his lifetime would not have dared to utter against him.—E. E.]

[D.]

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE WRITINGS OF JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY.

In this list, *a* denotes that books so marked, were republished by John Wesley in the collected Edition of his Works, issued in 1771–4. Those marked *b* have never been republished in any collected Edition of Wesley's Works. The references attached to some of the writings here named, are to the latest 12mo Edition of Wesley's Works.

1726.

On Mourning for the Dead.[1] A Sermon [2 Samuel xii. 23] preached at Epworth, by John Wesley, January 11, at the Funeral of John Griffith, a hopeful young man.—W. vii. 441.

1728.

On Corrupting the Word of God.[1] A Sermon [2 Cor. ii. 17] preached by John Wesley, about the year 1728.—W. vii. 446.

1732.

The Duties of Constant Communion. A Sermon [Luke xxii. 19] prepared for the use of his College Pupils. By John Wesley. About this time, but first printed in 1787, in the Arminian Magazine.—W. vii. 140.

On the Resurrection of the Dead.[1] A Sermon [1 Cor. xv. 35] abridged from B. Calamy, by John Wesley.—W. vii. 451.

a A Letter to Mr. Morgan on the Death of his Son, dated Oxford, October 18, 1732. By John Wesley.—W. i. 5.

A great portion of this letter was printed without Wesley's knowledge in "The Oxford Methodists," 1733. It was first printed entire by Wesley himself in 1739, as an introduction to his Journal.

1733.

a The Circumcision of the Heart. A Sermon [Romans ii. 29] preached before the University, by John Wesley, January 1.—W. v. 190.

On Grieving the Holy Spirit.[1] A Sermon [Ephesians iv. 30] written by John Wesley in the year 1733.—W. vii. 462.

a A Collection of Forms of Prayer for every day in the week, with Questions for self-examination. By John Wesley.—W. xi. 194.

Printed for the use of his College Pupils. Wesley's first publication. Republished in "*The Christian's Companion*, by George Whitefield, 1738," with a Preface, part of which is given.—W. xiv. 257.

A comparison of this edition, with the present reprints, will show some interesting differences.

[1] First published in 1829.

1735.

b The Christian's Pattern; or, a Treatise of the Imitation of Christ. Written originally in Latin by Thomas à Kempis, with a Preface. Compared with the original, and corrected throughout. By John Wesley, M.A., [with 5 Engravings,] xxxix. and 319 pp. 8vo. London: C. Rivington, [April] 1735.—Preface, W. xiv. 191.

b The Christian's Pattern; or, a Treatise of the Imitation of Christ. Translated from the Latin of Thomas à Kempis. Compared with the original, and corrected throughout, by John Wesley, M.A., [with a Frontispiece.] xviii. and 344 pp. 24mo. London: C. Rivington, 1735.—Preface, W. xiv. 289.

A cheap edition of the foregoing—not an abridgment. It shows Wesley's early predilections for a cheap literature.

Poetical address to Miss Martha Wesley on her intended Marriage. By Charles Wesley, [Clarke's Wesley Family, vol. 2. 327.]

The Trouble and Rest of Good Men. A Sermon [Job iii. 17] preached at Oxford by John Wesley, September 21, and published at the request of several of the hearers. 8vo. London: C. Rivington, [October] 1735.—W. vii. 349.

This sermon was never republished by Wesley. After a lapse of more than 70 years, it appeared in a volume of sermons by Charles Wesley, 1816; and, in 1829, was first admitted into Wesley's collected works.

b Advice to a Young Clergyman, in a Letter to him, concerning 1st, his Intention; 2nd, Converse and Demeanour; 3rd, Reading Prayer; 4th, Studies; 5th, Preaching; 6th, Administering the Sacraments; Lastly, Discipline. By a Divine of the Church of England, [Samuel Wesley, sen.,] with Preface [by John Wesley.] London: C. Rivington [October], 1735. Reprinted in Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley, vol. ii., p. 499.

The Pleasantness of a Religious Life. (On Proverbs iii. 17.) By John Wesley. 8vo, 1735.

This I give on the authority of Watts' Bibliotheca Britannica. I have never

seen it, and it appears in no edition of Wesley's Sermons or Works.

Sermon on 1 Kings xviii. 21. By Charles Wesley. Preached at Cowes, &c., [first published in Charles Wesley's Sermons, 1816.]

1736.

b Dissertationes in Librum Jobi. Auctore Samuel Wesley. Folio. London: C. Rivington, [February,] 1736.

John Wesley superintended the publication of this work, and revised the sheets as they passed through the press.

A Sermon on Love, [1 Cor. xiii 3,] preached at Savannah, by John Wesley, February 20, 1736—W. vii. 468.

A Sermon on Philip. iii. 13, 14, preached on board the "Simonds." By Charles Wesley. [Charles Wesley's Sermons, 1816.]

A Sermon on Matt. vi. 22, 23, preached at Frederica on arrival, March, 1736. By Charles Wesley. [Ibid.]

A Sermon on Psalm cxxvi. 6, preached at Frederica, &c. By Charles Wesley. [Ibid.]

A Sermon on the Holy Spirit, [2 Cor. iii. 17,] preached at St. Mary's, Oxford, by John Wesley, on Whitsunday, 1736—W. vii. 484.

This is so described in the last collected edition of Wesley's Works. Wesley was in America at the time. I am unable to fix a correct date for this Sermon.

A Sermon on John xiii. 7, preached in America. By Charles Wesley. [Charles Wesley's Sermons, 1816.]

A Sermon on Mark xii. 30, preached on board the London Galley. By Charles Wesley. [Ibid.]

Several Sermons by Charles Wesley, preached at Frederica, are still extant in MS.

1737.

Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal, Minister of Savannah, containing a Conference had with some of the Chickesaw Indians, &c., July 20, 1736—published in "Gentleman's Magazine," May 1737. [This differs slightly from the Journal afterwards published.] John Wesley's Journals, during his residence in Georgia, were sent to England from time to time, and were extensively read *in MS.* This extract is all I have been able to trace in print.

b Extract of a Letter from the Rev. Mr. Wesley, dated at Savannah, in Georgia, February 16, 1736—7. {"Gentleman's Magazine, September."]

1738.

a A Sermon on Salvation by Faith, [Ephesians ii. 8,] by John Wesley. 23 pp. 12mo. London: James Hutton, 1738—W. v. 5.

Described in all the editions of Wesley's Works, his own as well as the later, as having been preached before the University, June 18, 1738. This is clearly a mistake, Wesley being in Germany at that time. It was probably preached June 11; see his Journal of that date, also Charles Wesley's Journal, June 21; it was not however published till November. Hutton also advertised about the same time, a Sermon on God's Free Grace, by John Wesley; but this is doubtless the same Sermon.

A Journal of a Voyage from London to Savannah, in Georgia. In two parts. By G. Whitefield, A.B. Corrected and prepared for the press by Charles Wesley, August, 1738.

b A Collection of Psalms and Hymns. [By John Wesley.] 84 pp. 12mo. London: Printed in the year 1738.

For description of this Volume, see p. 759.

A Sermon on Exodus xx. 8, preached at Islington. By Charles Wesley. [Charles Wesley's Sermons, 1816.]

a The Doctrine of Salvation, Faith, and Good Works. Extracted from the Homilies of the Church of England. By John Wesley. Written, November 12. London: J. Hutton, 1738, 12mo.

a Rules of the Band Societies. Drawn up by John Wesley, December 25, 1738.—W. viii. 262.

1739.

a An Abstract of the Life and Death of Mr. Thomas Halyburton. With recommendatory Epistle, by Whitefield, and Preface by John Wesley. Dated, February 9, 1738 9. xii. 107 pp. 12mo.—February, London, Oswald, 1739.—Preface, W. xiv. 203.

The mother of James Hutton [Wesley and Whitefield's publisher] would not let her son publish this for Wesley, because Halyburton was a Presbyterian, and talked of religious experiences. See her Letter to Samuel Wesley in Benham's Life of Hutton; also, see Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley, vol. 1. In the later editions of this work, Whitefield's Epistle was omitted.

b Hymns and Sacred Poems. Published by John and Charles Wesley. 223 pp. 12mo. London: J. Hutton, 1739.—Preface, W. xiv. 303.

This volume contains 139 hymns and poems, 55 of which are selected, the remainder are originals by Charles Wesley, and translations by John Wesley. A second edition [160 pp. 12mo] was published the same year, from which several hymns were omitted, probably those unfitted for singing, and some added. A third edition [223 pp. 12mo] was also issued in August of the same year, being a reprint of the first with a trifling alteration. Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley, vol. 1, gives several of the hymns in this collection in the order in which they were written.

b Poetical Address to Whitefield, by Charles Wesley; commencing, "Brother in Christ, and well-beloved"—9 stanzas of 4 lines each. Prefixed to Whitefield's "Journal from his arrival at London to his departure from thence to Georgia." [June.]
Poetical Address to Whitefield, by Charles Wesley; commencing, "Servant of God, the Summons hear"—9 stanzas of 4 lines each. Prefixed to Whitefield's "Journal during the time he was detained in England by the embargo."

Cennick's Hymns. Corrected and prepared for publication, by Charles Wesley.

a Nicodemus; or, a Treatise on the Fear of Man. From the German of A. H. Franck. Abridged, by John Wesley.—viii. 40 pp. 8vo. Bristol: S. & F. Farley, 1739.

a An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's "Journal from his Embarking for Georgia, October 14, 1735, to his Return to London, February 1, 1737-8." [I.] 12mo. Bristol, 1739.—W. i. 5.

b Two Treatises: The First, on Justification by Faith, &c.; the Second, on the Sinfulness of Man's Natural Will. By the learned and judicious Dr. Barnes. With Preface containing some Account of the Author. Extracted from the Book of Martyrs. By John Wesley. 99 pp. 12mo. [December] 1739.

a The Character of a Methodist by John Wesley.—W. viii. 325.
Wesley, in his "Plain Account of Christian Perfection," says, he published this the latter end of 1739. The first edition, however, which I have seen, bears date 1742. Bristol: Farley, iv. and 20 pp. 12mo, and has appended a "Hymn on the Whole Armour of God," commencing, "Soldiers of Christ, Arise," 16 stanzas of 8 lines each. It bears on the title-page the words, "Not as though I had already attained." . . .

1740.

a Free Grace. A Sermon on Romans viii. 32 preached at Bristol, by John Wesley. 24 pp. 12mo. London: W. Strahan, 1740.—W. vii. 356.
Annexed to the original edition of this Sermon is a "Hymn on Universal Redemption," by Charles Wesley, 36 stanzas of 4 lines each, which is not reprinted with the Sermon in Wesley's Works.
In a characteristic preface or advertisement, Wesley declines to answer a pamphlet, entitled "Free Grace Indeed;" for he says, "I dare not speak of the deep things of God in the spirit of a prize-fighter or a stage-player." The publication of the Sermon caused a breach between the Wesleys and Whitefield. It is a note-worthy fact, that this sermon was never included by Wesley in any collected editions of his Sermons. In his own edition of his Works, it is placed among his Controversial writings.

b Hymns and Sacred Poems. Published by John and Charles Wesley, 209 pp. 12mo. London, 1740.—Preface, W. xiv. 306.
This volume contains 96 Hymns and Poems, four only of which are selected from other writers.
In 1743 an abridgment of the volume of Hymns published in 1739, and this volume, with both of the prefaces, were published together as "Hymns and Poems," 4th edition, and, in 1756, as the 5th edition.

a Serious Considerations concerning the Doctrines of Election and Reprobation. Extracted from a late Author [Dr. Watts], with an Address to the reader, by John Wesley, 12 pp. 12mo. London, 1740.
The address to the reader is not reprinted in Wesley's Works, last edition.

a An Extract of the Rev. John Wesley's Journal, from February 1st. 1737-8. to his return from Germany. Preface dated Sept. 29, 1740. [II.] 12mo. Bristol, 1740. W. i. 74

b The Nature and Design of Christianity, extracted from a late Author (W. Law's Treatise on Christian Perfection) by John Wesley, 24 pp. 12mo.

1741.

a An Extract of the Life of Monsieur de Renty, a late nobleman of France. Published by John Wesley. Title and 67 pp. 12mo. London: Printed by W. Strahan, 1741.

a The Scripture Doctrine concerning Predestination, Election, and Reprobation. Extracted from a late Author, by John Wesley. 16 pp. 12mo. London: Printed by W. Strahan, 1741.
This forms one of the treatises in the "Preservative," 1758. It was also reprinted in the Arminian Magazine, vol. ii. A reply to it was published in the Gospel Magazine, 1769.

a A Short Account of the Death of Mrs. Hannah Richardson. Published by Charles Wesley. 8 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1741.

a Serious Considerations on Absolute Predestination. Extracted from a late Author [Barclay's Apology for the Quakers], by John Wesley. 24 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1741.

a Reflections upon the Conduct of Human Life with reference to Learning and Knowledge. Extracted from Mr. Norris, by John Wesley. (2nd edition, 36 pp. 12mo, 1741.)

a An Extract of the Christian Pattern, or a treatise of the Imitation of Jesus Christ. Written in Latin by Thomas à Kempis. Published by John Wesley. 130 pp. 12mo. London: W. Strahan, 1741.

True Christianity Defended. A Sermon by John Wesley [Isaiah i. 21], dated June 24, 1741.—W. vii. 431.

Found among Mr. Wesley's MSS. in a mutilated form. A Latin copy of the same discourse also was discovered. Dr. Clarke says, "The sermon no doubt was written with the design of being preached before the University of Oxford."

a The Almost Christian. A Sermon [Acts xxvi. 28] preached at St. Mary's, Oxford, before the University, July 25. By John Wesley.—W. v. 14.

The 15th Edition was published in 1780. London, 12 pp. 12mo.

a Dialogue between a Predestinarian and his Friend. Published by John Wesley.—W. x. 250.

The 2nd Edition was corrected and enlarged [with a Preface to all Predestinarians], 12 pp. 12mo. London 1741.

In the Preface to a Poem published by Joseph Gurney in 1778, entitled "The Perfections of God a Standing Rule to Try all Doctrines and Experience by," Wesley is charged with having plagiarized this from a "Dialogue between a Presbyterian and a Baptist," published by Mr. Grantham of Norwich in 1696. I have compared the two and find that the charge is altogether groundless.

b A Collection of Psalms and Hymns, by John Wesley.

This was the basis of the collection afterwards used at the Morning Services of the Methodists. The 2nd edition, 138 pp. 12mo, London, 1743, was enlarged, and contained 130 Psalms and Hymns in two parts, 56 of which were by Charles Wesley; it had also Charles Wesley's name added in the title-page. From time to time hymns were added. The 17th edition, London, Kershaw, 1824, contains 248 pp. 12mo, and consists of six parts. Part 1—81 Psalms and Hymns; Part 2—88 Psalms and Hymns; Part 3—53 Hymns of Praise; Part 4—37 Hymns of Prayer; Part 5—31 Hymns on the Goodness of God; Part 6—77 Miscellaneous Hymns, in all 367. The 18th edition, 24mo, 1825, was the last published. There were, however, at least 23 Editions, as I have seen that number, and probably there were more.

b Hymns on God's Everlasting Love. To which is added, The Cry of the Reprobate. [By Charles Wesley], 36 pp. 12mo.

b Hymns on God's Everlasting Love. Part II. [by Charles Wesley], 48 pp. 12mo.

A second edition of the two parts, in one tract of 84 pp. 12mo, was published in 1756. Part 1 consisted of 18 Hymns; Part 2 of 20 Hymns, the last 5 of which were headed "Gloria Patri." A 3rd Edition was published in 1770, and a 4th in 1790.—[See also note in 1754.] "The Cry of the Reprobate" was re-published in Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley, Vol. i. 263.

a Christian Perfection. A sermon, [Phil. iii. 12], by John Wesley.—W. vi. 1.

Appended to this Sermon in Wesley's Sermons, vol. iii. 1750; Works, 1771, vol. iii., and also in the last edition, is a Hymn on the Promise of Sanctification, by Charles Wesley, 28 stanzas of 4 lines each. The sermon was written at the suggestion of Bishop Gibson, who, on hearing what Mr. Wesley meant by *perfection*, told him to publish it to all the world and see who could confute it.

1742.

b Hymns and Sacred Poems. Published by John and Charles Wesley. Title, preface, and contents, xii pp.; hymns, 304 pp.; index, &c, 8 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1742.—Preface, W. xiv. 311.

This volume is distinct from those bearing the same title already named. It contains 155 hymns and poems; some of which are divided, making really 179, nearly all of which are by Charles Wesley.

a Awake, Thou that Sleepest. A Sermon [Ephesians v. 14] preached before the University, April 4. By Charles Wesley. 24 pp. 12mo.—W. v. 22.

Three editions of this sermon were published in this year, and about thirty editions before the author's death.

a A Treatise on Christian Prudence. *Extracted from Mr. Norris.* By John Wesley. 35 pp. 12mo. London, 1742.

b An Elegy on the Death of Robert Jones, Esq., of Fonmon Castle, Glamorganshire, South Wales. By Charles Wesley. 26 pp. 4to. Bristol, 1742.

Reprinted in Collection of Poems, 1744; in Charles Wesley's Journal, 1849; and in Bards of Epworth, 1856.

a The Principles of a Methodist. By John Wesley. Occasioned by a late pamphlet, entitled "A brief History of the Principles of Methodism." iv. and 32 pp. 12mo. Bristol, F. Farley, 1742.—W. viii. 346.

This is described in Wesley's own edition of his collected works, as well as in the later editions, as "*published in* 1740;" but this is incorrect, as the work to which it is a reply was not issued till July, 1742.

b A Collection of Hymns [consisting of 24 hymns, translated from the German by John Wesley], 36 pp.

These are from "Hymns and Sacred Poems." 1739 and 1740.

b A Collection of [36] Tunes set to Music, as they are sung at the Foundery, 36 pp. 12mo. 1742.

a An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal from August 12, 1738, to Nov. 1, 1739 [III.], 12mo. Bristol, 1742.—W. i. 139.

b Two Letters, by John Wesley, dated Aug. and Oct., 1742, in reference to the matter of Mrs. Williamson. In "The Progress of Methodism in Bristol." 71 pp. 16mo. Bristol, 1743.

1743.

b Thoughts on Marriage and Celibacy, 12 pp. 12mo. 1743.

a A Word in Season; or, Advice to a Soldier, 6 pp. 12mo.—W. xi. 189.

a The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies in London, Bristol, Kingswood, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne.—Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 12mo, 1743.

This, the first edition of the "Rules," is signed by John Wesley only, and bears date Feb. 23, 1742-3. It differs somewhat from the second and succeeding editions, which were signed by John and Charles Wesley, and bear date May 1. 1743. The first edition has annexed, "A Prayer for those who are convinced of Sin," eighteen stanzas of four lines each. This does not appear in the second edition, but it is added to several of the later editions.—W. viii. 259. To the *fourth edition*, London, 12 pp. 12mo, 1744, were added the "Rules of the Band Societies."

a An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion. By John Wesley. [To which is annexed a Hymn on Primitive Christianity, in two parts. Part I., fourteen stanzas; Part II., sixteen stanzas, of four lines each.] Second edition, 51 pp. 12mo. Bristol, Felix Farley. 1743.—W. viii. 1.

Wesley, in his own collected edition of his works, says, "written in the year 1744," and the error has been perpetuated.

Instructions for Children. By John Wesley. [Finished July 4, 1743.] (Third edition, 36 pp. 12mo, 1747.) Preface.—W. xiv. 208.

Extracted from Abbé Fleury and M. Poiret. See Wesley's high opinion of it in his "Life of Fletcher."

a A Practical Treatise on Christian Perfection. *Extracted from a late author* [*W. Law.*] By John Wesley. 115 pp. 12mo, 1743.

1744.

a Modern Christianity exemplified at Wednesbury, and other Adjacent Places in Staffordshire. [Oct. 22, 1743.] Published by John Wesley. Second edition, London, 28 pp. 12mo. Strahan, 1745.—W. xiii. 161.

Has the motto, "Tua res agitur paries quum proximus ardet."

a The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to Come. Abridged by John Wesley. Second edition, 49 pp. 12mo. Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1744.

a An Extract from the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal from November 1, 1739, to September 3, 1741. [iv.] With prefatory Letter to the Moravian Church, dated June 24, 1744.—W. i. 228. The first edition, 120 pp. 12mo, London, 1744, has annexed, "The Means of Grace," by Charles Wesley, twenty-three stanzas, four lines each. (reprinted in Jackson's "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. i.;) and "The Bloody Issue," by Charles Wesley, seventeen stanzas, six lines each; neither of which are reprinted in connection with this Journal.

The Rev. Thomas Church published Remarks upon this Journal. *See* 1745.

a A Brief Account of the Occasion, Process, and Issue of a late Trial at the Assize held at Gloucester, 3rd March, 1743, between some of the people called Methodists, plaintiffs, and certain persons of the town of Minchinhampton, in the said county, defendants. Extracted from Mr. Whitefield's Letter. By John Wesley. 12 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1744.—Preface, W. xiv. 206.

This has annexed, "A Prayer for H. M. King George," ten stanzas of four lines each.

A Narrative of the Late Work of God at and near Northampton, in New England, *Extracted from Mr. Edwards' Letter to Dr. Coleman.* By John Wesley, 48 pp. 12mo. Bristol.

a The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God. *Extracted from Mr. Edwards.* By John Wesley, 48 pp. 12mo, 1744.

b Hymns for Time of Trouble and Persecution. By John and Charles Wesley, 47 pp. 12mo, 1744.

Contains 13 Hymns for Times of Trouble, 16 in Time of Persecution, and 4 to be sung in a Tumult. A 2nd edition was published in 1745, 69 pp. 12mo, containing, in addition, 15 Hymns for Times of Trouble, for the year 1745. And a 3rd edition in 1756, 83 pp. 12mo, including Six Hymns for Times of Trouble, which had appeared separately in 1746.

a A Collection of Prayers for Families. By John Wesley, 24 pp. 12mo.—W. xi. 226.

b A Collection of Moral and Sacred Poems, from the most celebrated English Authors. By John Wesley.

In three volumes, vol. 1, vii. and 347 pp.; vol. 2, 373 pp.; vol. 3, 288 pp., contents 8 pp. and errata 2 pp. 12mo. Bristol: Felix Farley, 1744.

The Third Volume contains 25 Poems and Hymns, by John and Charles Wesley. Dedicated to the Countess of Huntingdon, who suggested the idea to Wesley [August 1744]. W. xiv. 313.

a The Life of God in the Soul of Man; or, the Nature and Excellency of the Christian Religion. Abridged [from Scougal] by John Wesley, 48 pp. 12mo., Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1744.

The complete edition of this book was a favourite with the Wesleys at College. Charles Wesley lent it to Whitefield

soon after their first interview, and it was while reading it that he first learnt of the "new birth." *See Whitefield's Journal.*

a Scriptural Christianity: a Sermon [Acts iv. 31] preached August 24 before the University, by John Wesley, 30 pp. 8vo. Bristol, [October] 1744.—W. v. 33.

a The Case of John Nelson, written by himself. Published by John Wesley, 36 pp. 12mo. [October] 1744.

a A Serious Call to a Holy Life. *Extracted from a late Author* [*William Law.*] By John Wesley, 230 pp. 12mo, 1744.

b An Extract of Count Zinzendorf's Discourses on the Redemption of Man by the Death of Christ. By John Wesley 78 pp. 12mo, 1744

b Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord. [18 by Charles Wesley,] 24 pp. 12mo, 1744.

Of an edition of these Hymns, published in 1761, Wesley writes to his brother Charles, December 26, 1761—"Pray tell R. Sheen I am highly displeased at his reprinting the Nativity hymns, and omitting the very best hymn in the Collection, 'All glory to God in the sky,' &c. I beg they may never more be printed without it. Omit one or two and I will thank you; they are namby-pambical." This advice does not seem to have been followed.

b Hymns for the Watchnight. [11, by Charles Wesley.] 12 pp. 12mo. No date.

The first of these hymns appeared in Hymns and Sacred Poems, 1742. The remaining ten were republished in Hymns and Sacred Poems, 1749, vol. 2

b Funeral Hymns. [16, by Charles Wesley.] 24 pp. 12mo.

This passed through nine editions. The first edition is without date.

a A Companion for the Altar. Extracted from Thomas à Kempis. By John Wesley. (4th edition, 24 pp. 12mo. 1748.)

Directions for the Band Societies. December 25, 1744.—W. viii. 263.

1745.

a A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion. By John Wesley. Dated December 22, 1744. Has annexed the hymn, "Behold the Servant of the Lord." Title and 106 pp. 12mo. London, January, 1745. —W. viii. 45.

a An Earnest Persuasive to keep the Sabbath Holy. 4 pp. 12mo. Reprinted as "a Word to a Sabbath-breaker."—W. xi. 157.

a Swear not at all, saith the Lord God of Heaven and Earth. 4 pp. 12mo.—W. xi. 160. Reprinted as a "Word to a Swearer."

a An Answer to the Rev. Mr. Church's Remarks on the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Last Journal. In a Letter to that Gentleman. By John Wesley. London, 46 pp. 12mo. 1745.—W. viii. 360.

a Thoughts concerning the present Revival of Religion in New England. By Jonathan Edwards. Abridged by John Wesley. 124 pp. 12mo, 1745.

Hymns for Times of Trouble for the year 1745. [15, by C. Wesley.]

A Dialogue between an Antinomian and his Friend. By John Wesley. 2nd Edition, 12 pp. 12mo. London, 1745.—W. x. 257.

An Extract only from this is given in the "Preservative," 1758, and Works, 1771.

A Short View of the Difference between the Moravian Brethren lately in England, and the Rev. Mr. John and Charles Wesley, &c. Extracted chiefly from a late Journal; with Six Hymns, by Charles Wesley, appended. Signed by John and Charles Wesley, and dated May 20, 1745. 24 pp. 12mo. London, 1745.—Extract only, W. x. 194.

An Extract only from this is given in "Preservative," 1758, and Works, 1771.

A Letter to the Author of "The Craftsman," concerning real Christianity, disparaged under the name of Methodism.—W. viii. 512.

a An Extract of Mr. Richard Baxter's Aphorisms of Justification Published by John Wesley. Dated, March 25, 1745. iv. and 36 pp. 12mo. Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1745. —Preface, W. xiv. 207.

Hymns (166) on the Lord's Supper. By John and Charles Wesley. With Preface concerning Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice. Extracted from Dr. Brevint. By John Wesley. 141 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1745.

In most of the editions, Dr. Brevint's Tract was paged separately, and seems to have been sold separately.

a The Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice. Extracted from Dr. Brevint, by John Wesley. 32 pp. 12mo.

In 1856, when suggestions were made by some enthusiastic clergymen for a union between the Wesleyan Methodists and the Church, the Rev. W. Gresley republished this in a tract of 30 pp. to show that Wesley's views on this subject were identical with the teachings of the Church.

A Second Dialogue between an Antinomian and his friend, by John Wesley, dated August 24, 1745. 12 pp. 12mo. London, 1745.—W. x. 266.

An extract only, from this and the first Dialogue, is given in "Preservative," 1758, and Works, 1771.

a Advice to the people called Methodists, dated October 10th, 1745, by John Wesley. 2nd Edition, 11 pp. 12mo. London, 1746. —W. viii. 337.

a A Word in Season; or, Advice to an Englishman. Written October 15, 1745.—W. xi. 174.

Has annexed two hymns, one commencing, "Regard thou Righteous God and True;" the other, "For His Majesty King George."

a A word to a Drunkard. Written November

28 1745, by John Wesley. 4 pp. 12mo.—W. xi. 162

1746.

a A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion. Parts II. and III., by John Wesley. Dated December 18, 1745—[January] 1746.—W. viii. 132.

Lessons for Children, Part I., by John Wesley. Preface dated February 24, 1745-6; 76 pp. 12mo.—Preface, W. xiv 207.

b Hymns for Times of Trouble, [6, by Charles Wesley.] 12 pp. 12mo. No date.

a The Principles of a Methodist further explained, in a Second Letter to Mr. Church. 72 pp. 12mo. 1746.—W. viii. 398.

a A Short Account of the Death of Samuel Hitchens, by James Hitchens, Tinner. 11 pp. 12mo. London: Printed in the year 1746.

b Hymns (nine, and four prayers) for Children. By Charles Wesley. 12 pp

b Gloria Patri &c.; or, Hymns to the Trinity. By Charles Wesley. 11 pp. 12mo. London, 1746.

b Hymns (32) of Petition and Thanksgiving for the Promise of the Father. By John and Charles Wesley. 36 pp. 12mo, 1746.
Known also as "Hymns for Whitsunday."

b Hymns (7) for Ascension Day. By Charles Wesley. 12 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1746.

b Hymns on the Great Festivals and other Occasions. By Charles Wesley, with Music by Lampe, 4to. October, 1746.

b Hymns, Sixteen, for our Lord's Resurrection. By Charles Wesley, 24 pp. 12mo, 1746.

b Graces before and after Meat. By Charles Wesley, 12 pp. 12mo.

b Hymns, Seven, for the Public Thanksgiving Day, October 9, 1746. [By Charles Wesley], 12 pp. 12mo, 1746.

a A Word of Advice to Saints and Sinners. By John Wesley, 12 pp. 12mo. London, 1746.

a Sermons on Several Occasions. By John Wesley, with a Preface. W. v. i. November. 1746.
This was the first volume of Sermons published by Wesley.

1747.

a A Short Account of the Death of Thomas Hitchens. By James Hitchens, Tinner. 12 pp. 12mo. Printed in the year 1747.

Directions to the Stewards of the Methodist Societies in London, drawn up in the year 1747.—W. xiii. 485.

a A Word to a Protestant, by John Wesley.—W. xi. 179.

b Lessons for Children, Part II. By John Wesley, written December 15, 1746, 108 pp. 12mo.

b Hymns, Fifty-two, for those that seek and those that have Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ, by Charles Wesley. 4th edition, 72 pp. 12mo, London, 1755.

Minutes of the Conference held June 15 to 20, 1747. In his Journal of this date, published in 1754, he writes, "The Minutes, all that passed (at this Conference) were some time after transcribed and published."

a Letter to the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of London, occasioned by his Lordship's late Charge to his Clergy. London, June 11, 1747. By John Wesley.—W. viii. 462

a A Word to a Freeholder, June 24, 1747. By John Wesley.—W. xi. 187.

a Primitive Physic; or, an Easy and Natural Method of Curing most Diseases. By John Wesley, dated London, June 11, 1747, 119 pp. 12mo. London, July, 1747. Preface, W. xiv. 292.
Contains Preface xxiv. pp., 243 Receipts, and a list of disorders cured by cold bathing. It was revised in 1755, 1760, and 1780, and a 23rd edition published in 1791. The various editions bore the motto, "*Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.*" The medical profession, generally so ready to denounce heterodoxy in physic, allowed this work to circulate for nearly thirty years without opposition; in the year 1776 a Dr. Hawes entered the lists and wrote a rather ill-tempered book against it.

A Collection of Receipts, for the Use of the Poor [extracted from the Primitive Physic]. By John Wesley.

1748.

a A Letter to a Person lately joined with the people called Quakers, in Answer to a Letter wrote by him, [dated Bristol, February 10, 1747-8.] By John Wesley. Reprinted in "Preservative," 1758.—W. x. 171.

A Word to a Methodist, written by John Wesley, February 27, 1748. Translated into Welsh, and printed under the title of Gair I'r Methodist. O waith, Mr. J. Wesley, 1748; reprinted at Dublin in 1751, 8 pp. 12mo.

a Letter to a Clergyman, by John Wesley, [dated Tullamore, May 4, 1748, signed John Wesley] 8 pp. 12mo. Dublin, 1748.—W. viii. 477.

b Thomæ à Kempis de Christo Imitando Libri Tres, interprete Sebast. Castellione. In usum juventutis Christianæ. Edidit Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter. [John Wesley], 143 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1748.

b Historiæ et Præcepta selecta, in usum juventutis Christianæ. Edidit Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter. [John Wesley.] 79 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1748.

a Sermons on Several Occasions, vol. 2. By John Wesley.—W. i.

a A Short English Grammar. By John Wesley.—W. xiv. 1.

b Lessons for Children. Part III. By John Wesley, 124 pp. 12mo.

b Mathurini Corderii Colloquia Selecta. In usum juventutis Christianæ. Edidit

Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter. [John Wesley], 51 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1748.

b Instructiones et Prælectiones Pueriles. In usum juventutis Christianæ. Edidit Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter. [John Wesley], 39 pp. 12mo. 1748.

a Letter to a Friend concerning Tea. By John Wesley, [dated Newington, December 10, 1748,] 12mo. 1748.—W. xi. 482.

Seventeen Hymns on his Marriage. By Charles Wesley, *unpublished.*

1749.

b Excerpta ex Ovidio, Virgilio, Horatio, Juvenali, Persio, et Martiali. In usum juventutis Christianæ. Edidit Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter. [John Wesley.] 242 pp. 12mo, 1749.

b Caii Sallustii Crispi Bellum Catalinarium et Jugurthinum. In usum juventutis Christianæ Edidit Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter. [John Wesley.] 110 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1749.

b Cornelii Nepotis excellentium Imperatorum Vitæ. In usum juventutis Christianæ. Edidit Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter. [John Wesley.] 100 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1749

a An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal, from September 3, 1741, to October 27, 1743. [v.]—W. i. 316.

a A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Conyers Middleton, occasioned by his late "Free Inquiry," dated January, 1748-9. By John Wesley. —W. x. i.

The conclusion of this Letter was published separately, under the title of "A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity," 12 pp. 12mo.

a A Plain Account of the People called Methodists, in a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Perronet, Vicar of Shoreham, in Kent. By John Wesley. 34 pp. 12mo. Bristol: Felix Farley, February, 1749.—W. viii. 239.

a Directions concerning Pronunciation and Gesture. By John Wesley. 12mo. Bristol, 1749.—W. xiii. 488.

Referred to by Wesley in his Journals under the title of "Rules for Action and Utterance."

a A Serious Answer to Dr. Trapp's Four Sermons on the Sin, Folly, and Danger of being Righteous overmuch. Extracted from Mr. Law. By John Wesley. 48 pp. 12mo. London, 1749.

An Answer to a Letter published in the Bath Journal, April 17, 1749, signed M. D. [dated Limerick, May 27, 1749]. By John Wesley. —W. viii. 494.

A Short Address to the Inhabitants of Ireland, occasioned by some late Occurrences. [Dublin, July 6, 1749.] By John Wesley. 12mo. 1749.—W ix. 165.

Hymn on Occasion of his being presented by a Grand Jury in Ireland as a "Vagabond." By Charles Wesley. *Unpublished.*

a A Letter to a Roman Catholic. By John Wesley. Dublin, July 18, 1749.—W. x. 77.

a A Roman Catechism, with a Reply thereto. By John Wesley. 79 pp. 12mo; reprinted in the year 1756.—W. x. 83.

The careful editor of the last edition of Wesley's Works expresses a doubt as to Wesley being the author of this, and supposes it to be an abridgment of some previously published work. He is right in his conjecture, it being a reprint with very slight abbreviation of a Tract published in 1686, entitled "A Catechism Truly Representing the Doctrines and Practices of the Church of Rome, with an Answer thereto. By a Protestant of the Church of England." 104 pp. 8vo.

A Short Account of the School in Kingswood, near Bristol. By John Wesley. 8 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1749.—W. xiii. 269.

a The Manners of the Ancient Christians, extracted from a French Author [Fleury]. By John Wesley. 24 pp. 12mo. 1749.

b Hymns extracted from John and Charles Wesley's Hymns and Sacred Poems. 12mo. Dublin, 1749.

b Hymns and Sacred Poems, in two volumes, By Charles Wesley. Vol. I. 332 pp. (209 Hymns.) Vol. II. 336 pp. (246 Hymns.) 12mo. Bristol, 1749.

John Wesley, in his "Plain Account of Christian Perfection," says, "As I did not see these (volumes) before they were published, there were some things in them which I did not approve of."

A second edition was issued in 1755-6.

b A Christian Library, consisting of Extracts from and Abridgments of the choicest pieces of Practical Divinity which have been published in the English tongue. By John Wesley. [Preface to vol. i., dated Kingswood, March 25, 1749.] 50 vols. 12mo, 1749-55. Prefaces.—W. xiv. 211.

Wesley wished his preachers frequently to read in public, and enforce, select portions of this work.

It has been said that Doddridge, at Wesley's request, supplied him with a list of books suitable for the improvement of young preachers, and that, having secured this aid, Wesley proceeded to form his "Christian Library." —See *Smith's History of Methodism*, vol. i, *p.* 667. It is true that Wesley, in 1746, requested Doddridge to give him a list of books which would be useful to his young preachers; but it was in order that he might *found libraries in various parts of the kingdom*, and had no reference whatever to this scheme.—See *Doddridge's Letter in Arminian Magazine*, vol. i, p. 419. The whole plan of the "Christian Library" was Wesley's own; the books selected for abridgement were, with few exceptions, not even named by Doddridge in the letter above referred to; and therefore, whatever honour is due for the selection,

Wesley need not be called on to share with any one. He began the series with the "Epistles of the Fathers," Clement, Polycarp, and Ignatius, which, with Kempis, he had ten years previously declared he valued, next to the Bible, "above any other human compositions," and he closed it with the "Life of Gregory Lopez," of whose piety and character he was constantly expressing strong approval.

Great carelessness on the part of the printer, led to the insertion of several passages which Wesley had marked for *omission;* in consequence, he expressed his intention thoroughly to revise the whole work, but his numerous engagements prevented him—a circumstance much to be regretted. Richard Hill (Review of Wesley's Doctrines) took advantage of these errors to charge Wesley with teaching two doctrines.

A new edition was published in 30 vols. 8vo 1819-26. It contains eleven additional treatises abridged by Wesley, all of which he had published separately. It has very useful Indexes and Tables.

Minutes of Several Conversations between John and Charles Wesley and others. [Doctrinal.] Dublin, 1749.

b Minutes of Several Conversations &c. [Disciplinary.] Dublin, 1749.

The two last are reprinted in Minutes of Conference. Vol. i. 1862.

Reflections upon Past Providences. October, 1749. By John Wesley. *See* Appendix to this volume.

1750.

Hymns [Seven] for New-Year's Day, 1750. [By Charles Wesley.] 11 pp. 12mo, 1750.

Repeatedly reprinted, with the year altered.

Sermons [12] on Several Occasions. By John Wesley, vol. iii. 260 pp. 12mo. January, 1750.—W. iv. and v.

b Desiderii Erasmi Colloquia Selecta. In usum juventutis Christianæ. Edidit Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter. [John Wesley], 85 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1750.

b Phædri Fabulæ Selectæ. In usum juventutis Christianæ. Edidit Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Presbyter, [John Wesley], 35 pp. 12mo. 1750.

b Hymns [Twenty]. Extracted from "Hymns composed for the use of the Brethren, by the Right Rev. and Most Illustrious Count Zinzendorf." [By John Wesley.]

a Letter to the Author of the "Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists," compared. [Canterbury, February 1, 1749-50.] By John Wesley, 45 pp. 12mo. London, H. Cock.—W. ix. 1.

Compendium of Logic. [Translated from Aldrich. By John Wesley. March 25, 1750.]—W. xiv. 155.

Reprinted in 1830, with Notes, &c., by Rev. T. Jackson, the present Rector of Stoke Newington.

Sermon on the Cause and Cure of Earthquakes [Psalm xlvi. 8.] [By Charles Wesley,] 1750.—W. vii. 369.

First published anonymously, but really by Charles Wesley. *See* Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley, vol. i. It is printed without explanation among John Wesley's Sermons.

b Hymns [Six] occasioned by the Earthquake, March 8, 1750. [By Charles Wesley.] Part I. 12mo. London 1750.

b Hymns [Thirteen] occasioned by the Earthquake, March 8, 1750. [By Charles Wesley.] Part II. 12mo. London 1750.

Contains some fine hymns, among others that well-known hymn commencing "How weak the thoughts and vain."

A second edition of these hymns was published at Bristol in 1756, containing three additional hymns. A third edition, printed in London the same year, does not contain these additions.

a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Bailey of Cork, in answer to a letter to the Rev. John Wesley. [Limerick, June 8, 1750.] By John Wesley. 36 pp. 12mo. London, 1750.—W. ix. 61.

b A Short Account of God's Dealings with Mr. Thomas Hogg. Written by Himself, in a Letter [November 1741] to his Minister. With a Hymn on his Death, by Charles Wesley. Dated, June 29, 1750. 12 pp. 12mo, London. Printed in the year 1750

b A Short History of England.

b A Short Roman History. [An Edition, 155 pp. 12mo, 1773.]

b A Short Latin Grammar. [Third Edition, corrected and enlarged, 48 pp. 12mo. London, 1775.]—W. xiv. 31.

The three last-named works were prepared October 1750, for the use of Kingswood School. *See* Journal of that date.

1751.

b The Contents of a Folio History of the Moravians or United Brethren. Printed in 1749, and privately printed and sold under the title of *Acta Fratrum Unitatis in Anglia*, with suitable remarks. Humbly addressed to the Pious of every Protestant denomination in Europe and America. By a Lover of the Light. London, J. Roberts. 60 pp. 12mo, 1750.

The whole of this anonymous pamphlet was not written by John Wesley. I am not aware that it has ever before been attributed to him: but I think it bears internal evidence of having been prepared under his supervision. The Preface, unless I am much mistaken, is his. The Postscript is signed "A Methodist;" throughout the pamphlet

great prominence is given to the Wesleys and their opinions, and, as further corroboration, John Wesley was about this very time writing strong things in his Journals against the Moravians. This pamphlet is now exceedingly scarce.

a A Second Letter to the Author of the "Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists," compared. [With a Prefatory Letter to the Bishop of Exeter, dated November 27, 1750, in reference to some charges made by him against Wesley.] By John Wesley. 12mo. London, 1751.—W. ix. 14.

In recording the writing of this letter in his Journal, Wesley says, "Well might the ancients say, 'God made practical divinity necessary, the devil controversial.'"

a Thoughts upon Infant Baptism. Extracted from a late Author. [By John Wesley.] 21 pp. 12mo, 1751. Reprinted, 24 pp. 12mo. London : 1837.

A short Hebrew Grammar, [written February, 1751] By John Wesley.—W. xiv. 142.

b Lessons for Children. By John Wesley. Part IV. [February, 1751.]

A Short French Grammar. [By John Wesley.] 35 pp. 12mo, 1751.—W. xiv. 11.

a Three Sermons on the Original, Nature, Properties, and Use of the Law, and its establishment through Faith ; By John Wesley. 37 pp. 12mo. Bristol : Felix Farley, 1751.—W. v. 407.

First published in 1750 in Sermons, vol. iii.

a Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of Saints. [By John Wesley.] 24 pp. 12mo, London : [December] 1751.—W. x. 274.

Letter on Preaching Christ. By John Wesley. London : December, 20, 1751.—W. xi. 466.

First published in Arminian Magazine, vol. ii.

1752.

a A Second Letter to the Bishop of Exeter, in answer to his Lordship's late Letter. By John Wesley. Newcastle-upon-Tyne, May 8, 1752.—W. ix. 58.

a Predestination calmly considered. By John Wesley. 83 pp. 12mo. London : 1752.—W. x. 197.

An Edition was afterwards published, with the hymn entitled, "The Horrible Decree," 15 stanzas of 8 lines attached. Dr. Gill replied to this Tract. It was republished in Arminian Magazine, vol. ii.

a Serious Thoughts concerning Godfathers and Godmothers. [Athlone : August 6, 1752]—W. x. 486.

Reprinted in "Preservative," 1758.

a Some Account of the Life and Death of Mathew Lee, Executed at Tyburn, October 11, 1752 ; in the 20th year of his age. 24 pp, 12mo, 1752.

Has two hymns annexed, which Lee was frequently singing shortly before his execution. A second edition was published the same year.

1753.

a An Extract of the Life and Death of Mr. John Janeway, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, By John Wesley. 35 pp. 12mo. London : H. Cock, 1753.

a A Short Method of Converting all the Roman Catholics of Ireland. 12mo, 1753.—W. x. 124.

b The Complete English Dictionary, explaining most of those Hard Words, which are found in the best English writers. By a lover of Good English and Common Sense, [John Wesley.] N.B. The author assures you, he thinks this is the best English dictionary in the World. 12mo, 1753.—Preface, W. xiv. 223.

The Preface, dated October, 1753, is full of dry humour. A third edition, with an addition to the preface, was published in 1763. London : 154 pp. 12mo.

b Select Hymns, [149] for the use of Christians of all denominations. [By John and Charles Wesley.]

A sixth edition was published in 1776, and a tenth in 1787.

b The Trial of the Spirits both in Teachers and Hearers. Wherein is held forth the clear discovery of all that are carnal, and antichristian Teachers in these nations : testified from the word of God, before the University Congregations in Cambridge. By the Rev. Mr. W. D. [Dell], Master of Gonvil and Caius Colleges, Cambridge. Extracted by a Member of the Church of England. [By John Wesley.] 31 pp. 12mo, 1753.

b Hymns and Spiritual Songs, intended for the use of real Christians of all denominations, iv. and 132 pp. 12mo, 1753.—Preface W. xiv. 321.

A Selection of 116 Hymns from Hymns and Sacred Poems, 1739, 40, and 42. A 24th edition was published in 1786.

a An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal, from October 27, 1743, to November 17, 1746, [vi.]—W. i. 418, 160 pp. 12mo, London, H. Cock, 1753.

b Minutes of Several Conversations between Rev. Mr. John and Charles Wesley, and others. W. viii. 264.

1754.

a An Extract of the Rev. John Wesley's Journal, from November 25, 1746, to July 20, 1749, [vii.,] 139 pp. 12mo. London, H Cock, 1754.—W. ii. 37.

b An Answer to all which the Rev. Dr. Gill has printed on the Final Perseverance of Saints. By the Rev. Mr. Wesley. 12 pp. 12mo, London, Trye [December,] 1754.

This consists of 38 stanzas of 8 lines each, written by Charles Wesley, and first

published as the 3rd, 4th, and part of the 5th hymns in the second part of "Hymns on God's Everlasting Love," 1741.

1755.

b Queries humbly proposed to the Right Rev. and Right Honourable Count Zinzendorf, [with a Prefatory Address to James Hutton,] 32 pp. 8vo. London, J. Robinson, [January,] 1755.

James Hutton always attributed the authorship of this pamphlet to Wesley; certainly he had a hand in it, if he was not the actual writer. It was advertised among the books published by John and Charles Wesley, but it was never otherwise owned by Wesley.

b Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament, by John Wesley, [with a Portrait.] 765 pp. 4to, 1755. [Bristol Hot-wells, January 4, 1754-5.]—Preface, W. xiv. 224.

A 2nd edition in 1757; a 3rd in 1760; a 5th in 1795; and since frequently reprinted.

a Catholick Spirit. A Sermon, 2 Kings, x. 15. By John Wesley, 31 pp. 12mo. London, H. Cock, 1755.—W. v. 463.

First published in the 3rd volume of Sermons in 1750.

This edition has appended a hymn on Catholic Love. By Charles Wesley, seven stanzas of six lines each.

a Serious Thoughts, occasioned by the late earthquake at Lisbon. [By John Wesley.] 34 pp. 8vo. London, 1755.—W. xi. 1.

b An Epistle to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley. by Charles Wesley, 16 pp. 8vo. London, J. Robinson, 1755.

A very spirited Poem reprinted in Charles Wesley's Life, Vol. II. p. 545.

b An Epistle to the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, by Charles Wesley. [Written in the year 1755.]

First published in 1771, after Whitefield's death. *See that date.*

a The Means of Grace. A Sermon [Malachi iii. 7] by John Wesley, 23 pp. 12mo. London, 1755.—W. v. 174.

1756.

b A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Law, occasioned by some of his late writings [the Spirit of Prayer, and the Spirit of Love], by John Wesley, [December, 1755, and January, 1756,] 102 pp. 8vo. London, printed in the year 1756.

This has never been reprinted entire, an extract only is given in "Preservative" 1758, and Works 1771, and last edition of Works, ix. 445. It is a masterly production, and shows Wesley's skill as a controversialist to the best advantage. His employment of the "demonstratio ab absurdo" is used with the hand of a master.

a An Address to the Clergy. By John Wesley [February 6, 1756,] 31 pp. 8vo. London, printed in the year 1756.—W. x. 461.

Two Letters to the Rev. Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Dodd on Christian Perfection. By John Wesley. The 1st dated Feb. 5, 1756; the 2nd, March 12, 1756.—W. xi. 431.

These were first printed in the Arminian Magazine for 1779, and a portion of the 2nd Letter reprinted in the same Magazine for 1782. Only part of the 2nd Letter appears in the last edition of Wesley's Works—the editor having printed from the Magazine of 1782, and apparently overlooked the complete Letter.

A Letter to the Monthly Reviewer, September 9, 1756.—W. xiii. 360.

A Second Letter to the Monthly Reviewer, October 5, 1756,—W. xiii. 363,

b Hymns [Seventeen] for the year 1756, particularly for the Fast Day, February 6. [By Charles Wesley,] 24 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1756.

Contains those two fine hymns commencing, "Stand the Omnipotent Decree;" and "How Happy are the Little Flock."

An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal from July 20, 1749, to October 30, 1751, [viii.] Title and 107 pp. 12mo. London, printed in the year 1756.—W. ii. 144.

This was through the printer's error, omitted in Wesley's Works, 1771-4.

a Treatise on Baptism, [November 11, 1756.] By John Wesley—W. x. 181.

Reprinted in "Preservative," 1758.

Two Letters to the Rev. Mr. Clarke. dated, July 3, and September 10, 1756.—W. xiii. 199.

b The Good Soldier, extracted from a Sermon [2 Sam. x. 12] preached to a company of volunteers raised in Virginia, August 17, 1755, [by John Wesley,] 15 pp 12mo. London, printed in the year 1756.

1757.

a The Doctrine of Original Sin, according to Scripture, Reason, and Experience. By John Wesley. [Commenced November, 1756, completed August, 1757.] 8vo. Bristol, 1757.—W. ix. 132.

a A Sufficient Answer to "Letters to the Author of Theron and Aspasio," in a Letter to the Author by John Wesley. [November 1, 1757.] 12 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1757.—W. x. 287.

a A Short Account of the Life and Death of Nathanael Othen, who was shot in Dover Castle, October 26, 1757. 12 pp. 12mo. Bristol, no date.

1758.

A Letter to a Gentleman at Bristol. [Bristol, January 6, 1758.] 24 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1758.—W. x. 295.

a A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Toogood, of Exeter occasioned by his "Dissent from the

Church of England fully justified." [Bristol January 10, 1758.]—W. x. 481.
Reprinted in "Preservative," 1758.

a The Great Assize. A Sermon [Romans xiv. x.] preached at the Assizes at Bedford, March 10, 1758. By John Wesley. 8vo, 1758.—W. v. 160.

a A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Free. [Tullamore, May 2, 1758.] 12mo. London, 1758.—W. viii. 480.
Dr. Free republished this as "Dr. Free's" Edition of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's first Penny Letter, &c., with Notes upon the original Text, addressed to Mr. Wesley, and likewise a dedication to the Rev. Author. 43 pp. 8vo. London, 1758.

a A Second Letter to the Rev. Dr. Free. [Fonmon Castle, August 24, 1758.]—W. viii.
Dr. Free also republished this Letter with prolegomena, for the better information of the studious English reader, &c. 77 pp. 8vo. London. 1759.

a Hymns (40) of Intercession for all mankind. [By Charles Wesley.] 34 pp. 12mo. Bristol. E. Farley, 1758.
Contains the hymn "Lo He comes with clouds descending."

a Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England, [to which are appended Seven Hymns for the Lay Preachers, by Charles Wesley.]—W. xiii. 213.
Reprinted in 1760, and again in 1785. The Hymns are not published in the last edition of Wesley's Works.

a An Extract of a Short and Easy Method with the Deists. 12 pp. 12mo. 1758.

a A Treatise concerning the Godhead of Jesus Christ, *translated from the French.* 36 pp. 12mo. 1758.

a. The Advantage of the Members of the Church of England over those of the Church of Rome. 12mo.
These three last-named Tracts, with an abridgment of the Letter to Mr. Law, and eight other tracts previously published, were issued as

a A Preservative against Unsettled Notions in Religion. By John Wesley. 246 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1758.—Preface W. xiv. 229.

a A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Potter, [November, 1758].—W. ix. 84.

1759.

b A short Exposition of the Ten Commandments. Extracted from Bishop Hopkins [By John Wesley.] Preface, dated June 21. 1759. 96 pp. 12mo, 1759.—Preface only, W. xiv. 229.

A Letter to the Rev. John Taylor, D.D. [Hartlepool, July 3, 1759.]—W. ix. 444.

a An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal from November 2, 1751, to October 28, 1754. [ix.] 90 pp. 12mo, London: 1759. —W. ii. 235.

a A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Downes, Rector of St. Michaels Wood street, occasioned by his late Tract entitled "Methodism examined and exposed," [London: November 17. 1759.]—W. ix. 91.

b Token for Children. By John Wesley. 12mo, Bristol: 1759.

b Funeral Hymns, [43. By Charles Wesley.] Title and 70 pp. 12mo. London: Printed in the year 1759.
This is quite a different collection to that of 1744.

b Hymns [8] on the Expected Invasion 1759. [By Charles Wesley.] 12 pp. 12mo, no date.
These Hymns were reprinted as "Hymns on the Expected Invasion, 1779."

b Hymns [15] to be used on the Thanksgiving Day, November 29, 1759, and after it. [By Charles Wesley.] 24 pp. 12mo.

a A Word to an Unhappy Woman, by J. Wesley.—W. xi 164.

a A Word to a Condemned Malefactor, by J. Wesley.—W. xi. 171.

a The Nature of Enthusiasm, a Sermon [Acts xxvi. 24], by John Wesley.—W. v. 438.

a A Caution against False Prophets, a Sermon [Matthew vii. 15-20].—W. v. 388.

b Thoughts on Christian Perfection. [Bristol: October 16, 1759.]
Afterwards incorporated with the Plain account of Christian Perfection.

1760.

a Christian Instructions, Extracted from a late French Author. 54 pp. 12mo, 1760.

a The Duties of Husbands and Wives. [With Directions to Children and Servants.]

a Advice to the People called Methodists, with regard to Dress.—W.
These last four works, with six sermons, were published under the title:—

a Sermons on Several Occasions. By John Wesley. [Vol. iv.] 324 pp. 12mo. Bristol 1760.—W. vi.

b Original Letters between Mr. John Wesley and Mr. Richard Thompson on the Doctrine of Assurance, 8vo [May] 1760.

Directions for Married Persons, describing the duties common to both, and peculiar to each of them. By William Whateley. 12mo, 1760.—Preface xiv. 221.

A Letter to Mr. T. H., alias Philodemas, alias Somebody, alias Stephen Church, alias R. W. Inserted in the London Magazine for 1760, p. 651. [December 12, 1760.]—W. xiii. 365.

a The Desideratum; or, Electricity made plain and useful. By a Lover of Mankind and of Common Sense. [John Wesley.] Preface, dated November 1, 1759. 72 pp. 12mo, 1760.—Preface xiv. 231.

Hymn on the Death of Dr. Middleton, December 16, 1760. By Charles Wesley.
Published in Arminian Magazine, vol. 6.

b Letters to J. Clark, of Tuam. By John Wesley. Published in a pamphlet entitled, "Montanus Redivivus," 8vo, 1760.

1761.

b Hymns [134] for those to whom Christ is All in All. 144 pp. 12mo. 1761.
All selected from previous poetical publications, by John and Charles Wesley.

A Letter to Mr. G. R., alias R A., alias M. H., alias R. W. First inserted in the London Magazine, [Feb 17, 1761.]—W. xiii. 370.

b Select Hymns [132], with Tunes annext, designed chiefly for the use of the People called Methodists. [With an Introduction on the grounds of Music.]—Preface, W. xiv. 318.
The Tunes were published separately under the title of "Sacred Melody," and the Introduction in a pamphlet of 12 pp. 12mo, as "the Grounds of Vocal Music." A second edition of the complete book, corrected and enlarged, was published in 1765. 159 pp. 12mo.

a An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal, from February 16, 1755, to June 16, 1758. [X.] 146 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1761.—W. ii. 306.

1762.

a A Blow at the Root; or, Christ stabbed in the House of his Friends. 11 pp. 12mo. Bristol: W. Pine, 1762.—W. x. 350.

a Thoughts on the Imputed Righteousness of Christ. [Dublin, April 5, 1762.] By John Wesley. Second edition, London, 1762. 11 pp. 12mo.—W. x. 300.
This refers to a tract, "lately published in my name, concerning the imputed righteousness of Christ." This has no doubt reference to "a Blow at the Root," named above, and would seem to imply that that pamphlet was not written by Wesley.

a Wandering Thoughts: a Sermon [2 Cor. x. 4.] By John Wesley. 12mo. Bristol, 1762. —W. vi. 15.

b The Dignity of Human Nature. By John Wesley. 12mo, 1762.
This is a reprint of the first chapter of "the Doctrine of Original Sin," 1757. Not an abridgment of Burgh's book on the subject, as some have supposed.

Cautions and Directions given to the greatest Professors in the Methodist Societies. By John Wesley.
Afterwards incorporated with the "Plain account of Christian Perfection."

b The Life and Death of Mr. Thomas Walsh, composed in great part from the Accounts left by himself. By James Morgan, a member of the Church of England. 270 pp. 12mo. 1762. With a Preface by Wesley, dated January 20. 1763.—Preface. xiv. 234.
Extract from this given in Works, 1771, Vols. xi. and xii.

b Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scripture. By Charles Wesley. 2 vols. 12mo. Bristol, 1762.—Preface, W. xiv. 317.
Contains 1328 illustrations of passages in the Old Testament, and 817 in the New Testament. Many of these were reprinted in the Arminian Magazine 1779-1783.

a Letter to the Rev. Dr. Horne, occasioned by his late Sermon [on Justification by Works.] preached before the University of Oxford, March, 1762, by John Wesley.—W. ix. 104.

a Letters wrote by Jane Cooper, to which is prefixed some Account of her Life and Death. 41 pp. 12mo. [Third edition, 40 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1770.]—Preface, W. xiv. 234.

a A Letter to the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Gloucester, occasioned by his Tract on the Office and Operation of the Holy Spirit. By John Wesley. [Dated Nov. 26, 1762.] 114 pp. 12mo. London, 1763.—W. ix. 112.

1763.

b Farther Thoughts upon Christian Perfection. By John Wesley. 39 pp. 12mo. London: printed in the year 1763.
This was afterwards added to the "Plain Account of Christian Perfection." A few passages, however, were omitted, principally those having reference to the Moravians. Among other striking expressions omitted are these: "Let us not take to ourselves that pompous title, *The Church:* Keep to the plain old word, *Society*."

a A Sermon preached before the Society for the Reformation of Manners, on Sunday, January 30, 1763, at the Chapel in West Street, Seven Dials. [Psalm xciv. 16.] By John Wesley. 31 pp. 8vo. London, 1763. W. vi. 140.

b An Extract from Milton's Paradise Lost, with Notes. By John Wesley. 320 pp. 18mo. 1763. Preface.—W. xiv. 318.

a Sermon on Sin in Believers. [2 Cor. v. 17.] By John Wesley. [Written March 28, 1763.] —W. v. 138.

Minutes of Several Conversations between the Rev. John and Charles Wesley and Others. 12mo, 1763
A revised and enlarged edition of what are now called "The Large Minutes," first published in 1753.

b Hymns [100] for Children. By Charles Wesley. 84 pp. 12mo. 1763.
The later editions are called, "Hymns for Children, and Others of Riper Years." There were two second editions, one published at London in 1766, another at Bristol in 1768.

b A Survey of the Wisdom of God in Creation; or, a Compendium of Natural Philosophy. [By John Wesley.] 2 vols. 12mo. Bristol, 1763. Preface W. xiv. 285.
A second edition in 3 vols. was published in 1770; a third edition in 5 vols. in 1777. In 1836 a new edition was published, adapted to the then state of science, by R. Mudie, 3 vols. 18mo. The

Introduction to this work is reprinted under the title, "On the Gradual Improvement of Natural Philosophy."—W. xiii. 454; and the *Conclusion*, as "Remarks on the Limits of Human Knowledge."—W. xiii 460. Very copious Extracts were printed in the Arminian Magazine 1781-1790.

1764.

Letter to the Rev. Mr. Furley. Liverpool, July 15, 1764.—W. xiii. 493.

a A Short History of Methodism. By John Wesley.—W. viii. 333.

An Extract of Rev. Mr. Wesley's Journal from June 17, 1758, to May 5, 1760. [xi.]—W. ii. 428.

a A Treatise on Justification, extracted from Mr. John Goodwin, by John Wesley, with a Preface, wherein all that is material in Letters just published under the name of the Rev Mr. Hervey is answered. [Preface dated Hoxton Square, Nov. 16, 1764.] 207 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1765. Preface—W. x. 304.

1765.

b Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament. [Preface dated April 25, 1765.] By John Wesley. ix and 2613 pp. 4to. Bristol, 1765. Preface.—W. xiv. 235.

Issued in numbers, and sometimes bound in 2, and at other times in 3 vols.

Letter to Editor of London Magazine on Modern Astronomy, written January 1, 1765.—W. xiii. 372.

a Thoughts on a Single Life. By John Wesley, 11 pp. 12mo. London, 1765.—W. xi. 439.

Hymns on the Four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles. By Charles Wesley, in five 4to vols. Finished April 24, 1765; and eight times revised from 1774—1787. In MS. in the possession of the Wesleyan Conference. Part of these were published in the Arminian Magazine 1789-91. John Wesley at that time contemplated their publication entire. *See* his note in Arm. Mag. 1789, p. 279.

A Short Greek Grammar. [By John Wesley], 80 pp. 12mo. London, 1765.—W. xiv. 75.

Minutes of some late Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and Others.

The first of the annual publications, now known as "The Minutes," Wesley issued one every year until his death. He wrote the Biographies of the Preachers, republished.—W. xiii. 481.

The Scripture Way of Salvation. A Sermon on [Eph. ii. 8.] By John Wesley. 22 pp. 12mo. London, printed and sold at the Foundry, 1765.—W. vi. 40.

a The Lord our Righteousness. A Sermon [Jer. xxiii. 6] preached at the Chapel in West Street, Seven Dials, on Sunday, November 24, 1765. By John Wesley. 34 pp. 12mo. London, 1766.—W. v. 220

An edition was issued the same year in 30 pp. 8vo. "Printed for the benefit of the poor."

1766.

a A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, as Believed and Taught by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, from the year 1725 to the year 1765. By John Wesley. 162 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1766.—W. xi. 351.

This was several times revised, and the year altered to suit the time of publication; the last revision was in 1777, and all the editions since published bear this year on the title-page.

Some Remarks on a Defence of the Preface to the Edinburgh Edition of Aspasio Vindicated. [Edinburgh, May 1766.] By John Wesley.—W. x. 333.

1767.

a A Word to a Smuggler. [London, January 30, 1767.] By John Wesley.—W. xi. 166.

a An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal, from May 6, 1760 to October 28, 1762. [xii. January 31, 1767.] 12mo—W. iii. 1.

Letter to Dr. Dodd in Lloyd's Evening Post.

a Christian Letters [Thirty] by Joseph Alleine. [Preface dated March 7, 1767.] 88 pp. 12mo. London, 1767.—Preface W. xiv. 242.

A fourth edition was published the same year, 100 pp. 12mo.

a The Witness of the Spirit. A Sermon [Rom. viii. 16.] By John Wesley. [Newry April 4, 1767.] 16 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1767.—W. v. 115.

a The Repentance of Believers. A Sermon [Mark i. 15] by John Wesley. [Londonderry, April 24, 1767.]—W. v. 147.

b Hymns on the Trinity. [By Charles Wesley.] 132 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1767.

Contents.—The Divinity of Christ—Hymns 1 to 57; The Divinity of the Holy Ghost—Hymns 58 to 86; The Plurality and Trinity of Persons—Hymns 87 to 109; The Trinity in Unity—Hymns 110 to 156; Hymns and Prayers to the Trinity, 52 numbered separately.

b Hymns [166] for the use of Families, and on various occasions. By Charles Wesley. 176 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1767. Second edition, published in 1825.

b Extracts from the Letters of Mr Samuel Rutherford. By John Wesley. 12mo.

1768.

a Instructions for Members of Religious Societies, translated from the French. [By John Wesley.] 50 pp. 12mo, 1773.

a An Extract from the Rev. Mr. Law's Later Works, in 2 vols. [By John Wesley.] Vol. i. 251 pp., vol. ii, 204 pp., 12mo. Bristol, 1768.

Includes Law's Answer to Trapp, previously published separately, and has extracts from The Spirit of Prayer and Spirit of Love, &c.

a A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Rutherforth [March 28. 1768. By John Wesley.]—W. xiv. 329.

a An Extract of the Life of the Late Rev. Mr. David Brainerd, Missionary to the Indians. [By John Wesley.] 274 pp. 12mo. 1768.

a The Good Steward. A Sermon [Luke xvi. ii. By John Wesley.] Chaplain to The Right Honourable the Countess Dowager of Buchan. [Edinburgh, May 14, 1768.] 24 pp. 12mo.—W. vi. 128.

a An Extract of Mrs. Mary Gilbert's Journal. By John Wesley. [An edition 91 pp. 12mo. 1772.]—Preface, W. xiv. 248.

A Short Account of the School in Kingswood, near Bristol.—W. xiii. 269.

1769.

a An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal, from October 29, 1762, to May 25, 1765. [xiii.]—W. iii. 111.

a An Extract from the Journal of Mrs. Elizabeth Harper. By John Wesley. [An edition 58 pp. 12mo, 1772.]—Preface xiv. 249.

a Advices with Respect to Health, extracted from a late Author [Dr. Tissot.] By John Wesley. 218 pp. 12mo, 1769.—Preface, W. xiv. 243.

Abridgment of Watts's Treatise on the Passions, [February 17, 1769.] First published in Arminian Magazine, vols. v. and vi.

a An Extract of Letters on Religious Subjects, by Mrs. Lefevre. By John Wesley. 106 pp. 12mo, 1769.—Preface xiv. 247.

Address to Travelling Preachers, [August 4, 1769.]—W. xiii. 209.

1770.

a Free Thoughts on the present State of Public Affairs. In a Letter to a Friend, By John Wesley. 47 pp. 8vo. 1770—W. xi. 13.

b An Extract from Dr. Young's Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality. By John Wesley. [Commenced December 1768.] 241 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1770.—Preface, W. xiv. 319.

The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination Stated and Asserted. By the Rev. Mr. A— T—. W. xiv. 182.

This tract is deduced from Toplady's translation of Zanchius, and was published by John Wesley, to show to what inevitable conclusions Toplady's doctrines led. It concludes thus:—"The sum of all is this; one in twenty, suppose, of mankind are elected: nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can. Reader, believe this, or be damned. Witness my hand, A—— T——." Wesley's antagonists on the question, did not scruple to charge him with forgery on account of this pamphlet.

Minutes of several Conversations between the Rev. Messieurs John and Charles Wesley and others. 60 pp. 12mo. London, printed in the year 1770.

A revised and enlarged Edition of the "Large Minutes," first published in 1753.

a Some account of the Experience of E. J. 11 pp. 12mo, 1770.

Abridgment of a Treatise on "The Origin of the Soul" (November 7, 1770.) See Journal of this date. First published in Arminian Magazine, vols. v. and vi.

b An Elegy on the late Rev George Whitefield. By the Rev. Charles Wesley. 12mo 1770.—reprinted in Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley. Vol ii. p. 551.

a A Sermon on the Death of Mr. George Whitefield, preached at the Chapel in Tottenham Court Road, and at the Tabernacle near Moorfields, on Sunday, November 18, 1770. 32 pp. 8vo. 1770—W. vi. 158.

In the same year it was published at Dublin, 36 pp. 12mo, with two hymns annexed—I. "Servant of God, well done," 4 stanzas, 8 lines each: II. "Glory and Thanks and Love," 6 stanzas, 8 lines each.

b Sacred Harmony: or, a Choice Collection of Psalms and Hymns, set to Music in two or three parts, for the Voice, Harpsichord, or Organ (An edition, 354 pp. 12mo, 1781.)

The Question, What is an Arminian? answered By a Lover of Free Grace. [John Wesley] 8 pp. 12mo. Bristol, Pine, 1770—W. x. 345.

a Short account of Ann Rogers. By John Johnson, [dated April 8, 1769]. 12 pp. 12mo, London, Oliver, 1770.

1771.

A Letter to the Editor of Lloyd's Evening Post. February 26, 1771.—W. xiii. 377.

Sermons [Fifty-three,] on Several Occasions. By John Wesley. 4 vols. 12mo, 1771.—W. v. and vi.

A careful reprint of the four volumes published in 1746-48-50 and 60, with the addition of ten sermons, most of which had been previously published separately. It is to these four volumes that reference is made in the Trust Deeds of the Wesleyan Chapels.

A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Fleury. [Limerick, May 18, 1771.] By John Wesley.—W. ix. 1771.

b An Epistle to the Reverend George Whitefield, written in the year M.DCC.LV. By Charles Wesley. Contains 119 lines, commencing "Come on, my Whitefield," (since the strife is past.) 8 pp. 8vo. London, Oliver, 1771.

b Defence of the "Minute" of Conference relating to Calvinism, by John Wesley. A

Circular printed in Ireland for private circulation, and dated July 10, 1771.

The Works of the Rev. John Wesley. 32 vols. 12mo. Bristol: Pine. 1771-1774.

This is the only collected edition of Wesley's works published in his lifetime. It contains not only his original writings, but also the greater part of his abridgments, and includes several works first issued during the time it was passing through the press

An extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal, from May 27, 1765, to May 5, 1768, [xiv.]—W. iii. 208.

1772.

a Thoughts upon Liberty. [February 24, 1772.] By John Wesley.—W. xi 32.

Minutes of several Conversations between the Rev. Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, and Others. 12mo, 1772.

A revised and enlarged edition of the "Large Minutes."

b Preparation for Death, in several [Forty] Hymns. By Charles Wesley. 46 pp. 12mo, 1772.

Forty other hymns on this subject remain *unpublished*.

a A Short Account of Ann Johnson. By John Johnson. 11 pp. 12mo, 1772.

a A Short Account of the Death of Mary Langson of Taxall, Cheshire, who died January 29, 1769. [with Two Hymns appended.] 12 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1772.

a Thoughts concerning the Origin of Power. By John Wesley. 12 pp. 12mo. Bristol: Pine, 1772.—W. xi. 44.

a Some Remarks on Mr Hill's Review of all the Doctrines taught by John Wesley. [Bristol, September 9, 1772.] By John Wesley. 12mo. Bristol, 1772.—W. x. 360.

b On the Causes of, and the Remedy for, the Present Dearth. [A Letter from John Wesley.] Dated Dover, December 9, 1772. Published in the Scots Magazine, December 1772. It is in substance the same as "Thoughts on the present Scarcity of Provisions, dated Lewisham, January 20, 1773, but it differs somewhat in verbal expressions.

b A Short Account of the Life and Death of Miss Alice Gilbert, who died August 27, 1772, in the nineteenth year of her age.

a A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley. [Dated Latonstone, November 8 1764.] By a Gentlewoman. [Miss Bosanquet.] 20 pp. 12mo, 1772.

1773.

Thoughts on the present Scarcity of Provisions. By John Wesley. Lewisham, January 20, 1773.—W. xi. 50.

a Some Remarks on Mr. Hill's "Farrago Double Distilled." [Bristol, March 14, 1773.—By John Wesley. 12mo. London, 1773.—W. x. 429.

a An Extract of Two Discourses on the Conflagration and Renovation of the World. Written by James Knight, D.D., late Vicar of St. Sepulchre, London. 31 pp. 12mo. 1773.

b Select Parts of Mr. Herbert's Sacred Poems. 32 pp. 12mo. 1773.

a A Treatise on Religious Affections. In three parts. By Rev. Jonathan Edwards. Abridged by John Wesley. 69 pp. 12mo. 1773. [Preface dated Bristol, September 1, 1773.]—Preface, W. xiv. 257.

a A Short Account of John Dillon. 13 pp. 12mo. 1773.

a Christian Reflections. Translated from the French. 60 pp. 12mo. 1773.

A Sermon on Predestination [Romans viii. 29, 30.] By John Wesley. [Armagh, June 5, 1773.]—W. vi. 211.

Reprinted in Arminian Magazine 1782.

a The Consequence Proved. W. x. 356. Replied to by Toplady in his "More Work for John Wesley," published in 1774.

1774.

b A Sermon [1 Cor. i. 23, 24] preached at the opening of the New Meeting House at Wakefield, April 28, 1774. By John Wesley. 12 pp. 12mo. Leeds.

Thoughts upon Necessity. [Glasgow, May 14, 1774.] By John Wesley. [Second edition. 33 pp. 12mo. London: R. Hawes, 1775.]—W. x 439.

"I cannot believe," Wesley writes in the Preface to this tract, "the noblest creature in the visible world to be only a fine piece of clock-work"

An Extract of the Rev Mr John Wesley's Journal, from May 14, 1768, to September 1, 1770 [xv.]—W. iii. 306.

Thoughts upon Slavery. By John Wesley. 53 pp 8vo. London 1774.—W. xi 56.

"A supplement to Mr. Wesley's pamphlet, entitled 'Thoughts upon Slavery'" 107 pp. 8vo, London, H. Reynell, 1774, was not written by Wesley.

a An Extract from Dr. Cadogan's Dissertation on the Gout, and all Chronic Diseases. 49 pp. 12mo. 1774.—Preface, W. xiv. 252.

Remarks on Mr. Hill's Account of the Gentoo Religion in Hindostan. By John Wesley. First published in Lloyd's Evening Post, November 30, 1774, and reprinted in Arminian Magazine, 1785.—W. xiii. 380.

1775.

Sermon on the Trinity [1 John, v. 7], by John Wesley. [Cork, May 8, 1775.]—W. vi. 186.

A Calm Address to our American Colonies. By John Wesley. 23 pp. 12mo. London, 1775.—W. xi. 76.

This was a condensation of Dr. Johnson's pamphlet, "Taxation no Tyranny." In the first edition Wesley did not acknowledge his obligation to that work

but in the second edition, which was corrected and enlarged, he did. In the meantime, however, was published a clever but bitter tract, bearing on its title a vignette representing a fox in clerical vestments, and called "An Old Fox Tarred and Feathered," by an Hanoverian, in which quotations were given from Wesley and Johnson in parallel columns. This was written by Wesley's old antagonist, Toplady. Another curious anonymous pamphlet was published at Dublin, the authorship of which is still unknown, entitled, "A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing; or, an Old Jesuit Unmasked: containing an Account of the Wonderful Apparition of Father Petre's Ghost in the form of the Rev. John Wesley. By Patrick Bull, Esq." Fletcher wrote in vindication of Wesley's pamphlet, and Wesley himself wrote to *Lloyd's Evening Post* in Nov., and to the *Gazetteer* in Dec., in reply to some observations thereon.

National Sins and Miseries, a Sermon [2 Samuel xxiv. 17]; preached at St. Matthew's, Bethnal Green, on Sunday, Nov. 12, for the benefit of the Widows and Orphans of those who lately fell near Boston, in New England. By John Wesley. 8vo. 1775—W. vii. 382.

Wesley revised [Dec. 21, 1775] a volume of Latin Poems, written by a Gentleman of Denmark.—See his enthusiastic commendation of it, Journal, vol. iv. p. 61.

1776.

b A Concise History of England, from the Earliest Times to the Death of George II. By John Wesley. 4 vols. 12mo. 1776. Preface, W. xiv. 260.

Some Observations on Liberty, occasioned by a late Tract [by Dr. Price]. By John Wesley. 36 pp. 12mo. London, 1776.—W. xi. 86.

A Seasonable Address to the more Serious Part of the Inhabitants of Great Britain, respecting the Unhappy Contest between us and our American brethren: with an Occasional Word interspersed to those of a different complexion. By a Lover of Peace. [John Wesley.] 18 pp. 12mo. Bristol, 1776. W. xi. 114.

Prayer for the Rev. John Fletcher, June 30, 1776. By C. W.; *unpublished.*

b Some Account of the Life and Death of Nicholas Mooney. 36 pp. 12mo. 1776.

b An Extract of the Life of Madame Guion. By John Wesley. [Preface dated Nov. 9, 1776.] 230 pp. 12mo. 1776.—Preface, W. xiv. 262.

1777.

A Calm Address to the Inhabitants of England. By John Wesley. 23 pp. 12mo. London, Fry, [February,] 1777.—W. xi. 123.

Sermon on Numbers xxiii. 23, preached on Monday, April 21, 1777, on laying the Foundation of the New Chapel, near the City Road, London. By John Wesley. 47 pp. 12mo. London, Fry, 1777.—W. vii. 400.

The publication of this sermon brought forth a reply from Rowland Hill, entitled "Imposture Detected, and the Dead Vindicated," 40 pp. 8vo; which Thomas Olivers answered in his "Rod for a Reviler." 64 pp. 12mo. Wesley also wrote—

Answer to Mr. Rowland Hill's Tract, entitled, "Imposture Detected." By John Wesley. 12pp. 12mo. London, Fry, 1777.—W. x. 429.

Prayer for Dr. Dodd under Condemnation; and Lines on his Execution. By C. W.; *unpublished.*

An Extract of Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal, from September 2, 1770, to September 12, 1773 [xvi.] 119 pp. 12mo. London, Hawes, 1777.—W. iii. 390.

Thoughts upon God's Sovereignty. By John Wesley. 12mo. London, [June] 1777.—W. x. 347,

b Proposals for the Arminian Magazine. [August 14. 1777.] See Journal, vol. iv. p. 102.

A Sermon, preached November 23, 1777, in Lewisham Church, on Matthew xxv. 34, before the Humane Society. By John Wesley. 24 pp. 12mo. London, Fry, 1777.—W vii iii.

b A Short Account of the Death of Elizabeth Hindmarsh, who died September 6, 1777, in the 21st year of her age. 12pp. 12mo. 1777.

Short Address to the Readers of the Arminian Magazine, printed on the Cover of the First Number, dated Lewisham, Nov. 24, 1777.—W. xiv. 344.

1778.

The Arminian Magazine; consisting of Extracts and Original Treatises on Universal Redemption. Vol. i. for the year 1778. 600 pp. 8vo, and table of contents.

This volume contains, by John Wesley—Address to Reader, 6 pp. 8vo (W. xiv. 265); Answer to Objections to this Work, 4 pp 8vo (W. xiv. 345); and a Poetical Paraphrase on part of the 104th Psalm, 91 lines, not reprinted; also the following Extracts, Compilations, and Reprints:—Lives of Arminius, Luther, Bernard Gilpin, Bishop Bedell, Castellio, and Servetus; Account of the Synod of Dort, from Brandt; Bishop Womack's Examination of Tilenus: Goad on the Decrees; Plaifere on Predestination; Hoard's God's Love to Mankind; Leslie on Absolute Predestination; together with fifty-eight Letters, from various of his Friends and Relatives, to John Wesley; Selections of Poetry, by the Wesley family and

others: Lives of Jaco and John Atlay, written by themselves, in Letters to John Wesley, &c.

A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Thomas Maxfield, occasioned by a late publication, [February 14.] By John Wesley. 11 pp. 12mo. London. Fry, 1778.—W. xi. 459.

This does not appear in the third edition of Wesley's Works, 8vo. 1829, &c.

A Serious Address to the People of England, with regard to the State of the Nation. By John Wesley. [February, 1778.]—W. xi. 134.

A Call to Backsliders. A Sermon on Psalm lxxii. 7, 8. By John Wesley. 12mo, 1778. —W. vi. 487.

A Compassionate Address to the Inhabitants of Ireland, [Limerick, May 10.] By John Wesley. 1778.—W. xi. 143.

Some Account of the Late Work of God in North America, in a Sermon on Ezekiel i 16. By John Wesley. 12mo. 1778.—W. vii. 390.

1779.

The Arminian Magazine, vol. ii., for the year 1779. viii. 664, and 8 pp. of Index.

Contains by John Wesley, Address to Reader, [January 1, 1779.] 6 pp.—W. xiv. 268.

Thoughts on Salvation by Faith.—W. xi. 472.

Life of Dr. Donne (*not reprinted.*)

Treatise concerning Election and Reprobation. Extracts from a late Author. By John Wesley. (*Not reprinted.*)

Letters to Rev. Messrs. Walker, Adam, Dodd, and Clarke, and to Mr. N.

Reprints of some of his previous writings, and continuation of papers in the previous volume.

b A brief Narrative of the Revival of Religion in Virginia. In a Letter to a Friend. 4th edition. 35 pp. 12mo, 1779

An Extract of the Rev Mr. John Wesley's Journal, from September 13, 1773, to January 2, 1776. [xvii.] 82 pp. 12mo. 1779.—W. iv. 1.

b A Word to Whom it may Concern. 17 pp. 12mo. 1779.

b A Prayer for John Wesley's Life. By Charles Wesley. *A handbill.*

Reprinted in Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley. Vol. ii. 317.

A Collection of Prayers for Children. By John Wesley.—W. xi. 248

Popery calmly Considered. By John Wesley. 12mo.—W. x. 77.

1780.

Arminian Magazine, vol. iii., for the year 1780. 680 pp. and 8 pp. of Index.

Contains, by John Wesley, Address to the Reader, [January 1, 1780.] 6 pp.—W. xiv. 270.

b Extracts from J. Goodwin on the 9th of Romans; from E. Bird on Fate and Destiny, from an Exposition of the 7th of Romans, by a late Author.

A Thought on Necessity.—W. x. 455.

Thoughts upon Taste.—W. xiii. 439

b Extracts from the Lives of Armelle Nicholas, and Gregory Lopez.

Seventeen Letters to Rev. Mr. Walker, and others.

A Collection of [525] Hymns for the use of the People called Methodists. 520 pp. 12mo. 1780. [Preface dated October 20, 1779.]—W. xiv. 324.

2nd edition, 1781; 3rd, 1782; 4th, 1784; 5th, 1786; 6th, 1788; 7th, 1791; 8th, 1793; 9th, 1795 (?). In 1797 an edition was published with omissions and additions, making in all 563 Hymns. The Conference of 1799 not approving of these alterations, appointed several ministers to "reduce the book to its primitive simplicity, as published in the *second edition.*" About 1801, the necessary alterations were made, and since that period, with the exception of a few trifling alterations, the book has undergone no change. In 1830, in consequence of the copyright having expired, it was found necessary to add a Supplement. Prior to this, however, and even as early as 1792, unauthorized supplements had appeared, and probably were used in some of the country chapels, but without the sanction of the Conference.

b The Saint's Everlasting Rest. Extracted from Baxter. By John Wesley. 335 pp. 12mo. N. D.

Letter to the Printer of the Public Advertiser, occasioned by the late Act passed in favour of Popery, January 21, 1780. Letter to the Editor of the Freeman's Journal, March 23, 1780. A Second Letter to the Freeman's Journal, March 31, 1780. These letters were collected and published, with a Preface, dated December 29, 1780, in a Tract. 22 pp. 12mo. London, 1781.—W. x. 153.

b The History of Henry, Earl of Moreland, abridged by John Wesley. 2 vols. 12mo. 1780. Preface [Bristol, March 4, 1780.]—W xiv. 280

b Directions for Renewing our Covenant with God. [From Alleine.] 23 pp. 12mo. London, 1780.

Though, as early as 1764, this form was used in the Societies, it does not seem to have been published till this year. To the seventh and some of the later editions, three hymns were added.

b Account of the Conduct of the War in the Middle Colonies. Extracted from a late Author. 55 pp. 12mo. 1780.

This seems to have been afterwards issued as—

b An Account of the Rise and Progress of

the American War. Extracted from a late Author. [By John Wesley.] (4th edition. 56 pp. 12mo. London, 1780.)

b Reflections on the Rise and Progress of the American Rebellion. [Extracted from a late Author. By John Wesley.] 96 pp. 12mo. 1780.

b Hymns [13] written in the Time of the Tumults, June, 1780. [By Charles Wesley.] 19 pp. 12mo. Bristol, printed in the year 1780.

b The Protestant Association, written in the midst of Tumults, June, 1780. In four Cantos, to which are added, two satirical Addresses to the City, rebuking them for their disloyalty to the king, &c. By Charles Wesley. 34 pp. 12mo. 1780.

This created much excitement, and brought down upon its author many bitter expressions. In a curious little pamphlet called "Truth Exploded, or the art of Lying and Swearing made easy, and its usefulness explained. By a Cobbler of Cripplegate Ward." Published at Bath in 1782. The writer, in referring to this pamphlet, bursts into rhyme—

"Observe how in each famed canto,
Lies and slander beautifully flow,
And every thought is sinister,
Right worthy of the minister;
So sweetly the poetic sage
With rancour fills each shining page."

Minutes of several Conversations between the Rev. Mr. John and Charles Wesley, and others, from the year 1744 to the year 1780 52 pp. 12mo. London, no date.

An improved and altered edition of the Large Minutes, reprinted in Minutes. Vol. i., 1862.

1781.

The Arminian Magazine, vol. iv., for the year 1781. 680 pp and contents 8 pp.

Contains, by John Wesley, Preface, dated January 1, 1781, 4 pp.—W. xiv. 273-5. Sermons on 1 Timothy vi. 9.—W. vii. 1. 1 John v. 20.—W. vi. 401. 1 John v. 21 —W. vi. 411. 1 John iii. 8.—W. vi. 251. Galatians iv. 18.—W. vii. 54. 1 Corinthians xiv. 20.—W. vi. 331. Thoughts on the Power of Music.—W. xiii. 443. Thoughts upon Montesquieu's Spirit of the Laws.—W. xiii. 390. Account of the Brother's Steps.—W. xi. 477. Thoughts upon Jacob Behmen.—W. ix. 486. Scheme of Examination used by the First Methodists,—W. xi. 498. Plain account of Kingswood School.—W. xiii 274. Translation of Castellio's Dialogues on Predestination and Election, [not reprinted.] Extracts from his Journals and Natural Philosophy, and Three Letters to Fletcher and others.

b An extract from a Reply to the Observations of Lieutenant-General Sir William Howe, on a pamphlet entitled "Letters to a Nobleman." [By John Wesley.] 104 pp. 12mo 1781.

b An Extract of a Letter to the Right Hon. Vicount H——e, on his naval conduct in the American War. [By John Wesley.] 27 pp. 12mo 1781.

A concise Ecclesiastical History, from the birth of Christ to the beginning of the present century. By John Wesley. 4 vols. 12mo. London, 1781. Preface xiv. 282. To the fourth vol. was annexed a "Short History of the People called Methodists." Dated London, November 16, 1781, and occupying pp. 169—281. This is reprinted.—W. xiii. 287—360.

1782.

The Arminian Magazine, vol. v., for the year 1782. 680 pp. and contents, 8 pp.

Contains, by John Wesley, Continuation of Extracts from Castellio on Election and Free Will. [Not reprinted.]

Sermons on Romans viii. 19—22.—W. vi. 226. On Ephesians v. 16.—W. vii. 64. (*See* 1783.) Genesis iii. 19.—W. vi 215. Genesis i. 31.—W. vi 201. Romans v. 15.—W. vi. 216. [Also printed as a separate tract.] Mark ix. 48.—W. vi 360. [Also printed as a separate tract.] Preface to an Extract from the Journal of Mr. G. C.—W. xiv. 275. Preface and Appendix to "A Tale of Real Woe." [Not reprinted.] Prefatory Remarks on the Invisible World, affixed to a "Relation of the Chief Things an Evil Spirit did at Mascon."—W. xiv. 276. Remarks upon Mr. Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding.—W. xiii. 429. Some Thoughts upon an Important Question, [whether Methodists should attend the preaching of Calvinistic Clergymen.]—W. xiii. 231. Abridgment of a Treatise on the Origin of the Soul. (*see* 1770.) Abridgment of Watts on the Passions. (*see* 1769.) How far it is the duty of a Christian Minister to preach Politics.—W. xi. 148. A disavowal of persecuting Papists.—W. x. 166. Specimen of the Divinity and Philosophy of Jacob Behmen.—W. ix. 491. Remarks on Buffon's Natural History.—W. xiii. 423. Thoughts on the Character and Writings of Prior.—W. xiii. 394. Answer to a report on the case of Elizabeth Hobson.—W. xi. 481. Thirteen Letters to Mrs. S. R. and others.

b Hymns [Seventeen,] for the Nation in 1782. [By Charles Wesley.] 24 pp. 12mo.

b Hymns [Fifteen,] for the National Fast, February 8, 1782. [By Charles Wesley.] 23 pp. 12mo.

The two last named were also published together as Hymns for the Nation in 1782. 47 pp. 12mo.

b Prayer for Mr. Blackwell departing, and Hymn on the Death of Mr. Blackwell, both written in this year by Charles Wesley, are among his unpublished MSS.

An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal from January 1, 1776 to August 8, 1779. [xviii.] 112 pp. 12mo.—W. iv. 62.

b Alleine's Alarm to the Unconverted. 12mo. London, 1782.

b An Estimate of the Manners of the Present Times. By John Wesley.—W. xi. 149.

1783.

The Arminian Magazine, vol. vi. for the year 1783. 688 pp. contents 8 pp.

Contains by John Wesley, Sermons on Hebrews i. 14—W. vi. 341. Ephesians vi. 12—W. vi. 350. 2 Thessalonians ii. 7—W. vi. 237. Isaiah xi. 9.—W. vi. 261. Joshua xxiv. 15—W. vii. 72. Proverbs xxii. 6;—W. vii. 82. Extract from the Second Spira, [not reprinted.] Extract from Hilldrop's, Free Thoughts on the Brute Creation with a Preface—[W. xiv. 276.] Preface to Benson's Reply to Madan on Polygamy—W. xiv. 276. Extract from Bryant's Analysis of Ancient Mythology. [not reprinted.] Account of Dr Dodd—W. xi. 436. A Thought on the Manner of Educating Children—W. xiii. 447. Thoughts on the Writings of Baron Swedenborg—W. xiii. 401. Seven Letters to Alexander Coats, Lord—— and others.

b The Spirit of Prayer. 24 pp. 12mo.

b A Call to the Unconverted. By Richard Baxter. 76 pp. 12mo.

The Duty and Advantage of Early Rising. [on Ephesians v. 16.] By John Wesley, [reprinted from the Arminian Magazine, with an addition from Law's Serious Call, &c., by a Gentleman of Cambridge, June 29, 1783, without Wesley's knowledge.] 12mo. Cambridge, 1783.—W. vii. 64.

b Experience of some of the most Eminent Methodist Preachers, with an Account of their Call to and Success in the Ministry. 12mo. [reprinted from the Arminian Magazine.]

The Important Question. A Sermon, [Matthew xvi. 26.] By John Wesley. 23 pp. 12mo. London. 1783.—W. vi. 467.

1784.

The Arminian Magazine, vol vii., for the year 1784. Preface 4 pp. 676 pp. and contents 7 pp.

Contains by John Wesley. Preface 4 pp. dated, January 1. 1784 - W. xiv. 277. Sermons on 1 Corinthians vii. 35—W. vi. 420. James i. 4—W. vi. 459. 1 Cor. xiii. 9.—W. vi. 318; Romans xi. 33.—W. vi. 307; Coloss. iii. 20.—W. vii. 93; 2 Cor. vi. 17. 18.—W. vi. 439. Account of the late Work of God at Epworth, [not reprinted.] Some account of Dr. Philip Verheyen—W. xi. 503. An account of the Disturbances in my Father's House at Epworth.—W. xiii. 472. Thoughts concerning Gospel Ministers.—W. x 437. A Providential Event.—W. xi. 479; and Two Letters, to Mr. S. &c.

b The Sunday Service of the Methodists in the United States of America, with other occasional Services. 12mo. Preface, [dated, Bristol, Sept. 9 1784.]—W. xiv. 288.

b A Word to a Sailor. [I presume this to be by John Wesley, it was one of the publications of the first Methodist Tract Society].

b The Doctrine of Original Sin. Extracted from a late author. 40 pp. 12mo. London. 1784.

John Wesley, in March 1784, revised Fletcher's Letters to Priestley.

b The Life of Gregory Lopez, written originally in Spanish, abridged by John Wesley. 63 pp. 18mo. No date: [from Arminian Magazine, 1780.]

1785.

The Arminian Magazine, vol. viii., for the year 1785. 668 pp. and contents 8 pp

Contains by John Wesley, Sermons on 1 Corinthians xiii. i. 2. 3.—W. vii. 43; Hebrews vi. 1; W. vi. 388; Heb. xiii. 17.—W. vii. 103; John i. 47.—W. vii. 36; Philippians ii. 12. 13.—W. vi. 479; Revelation xxi 5.—W. vi. 271. Extracts from Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points, [not reprinted,] from President Davies Sermon "God is Love," [not reprinted.] The Real Character of Montanus.—W. xi. 465. Some Remarks on Article X of Mr. Maty's New Review for December 1784.—W. xiii. 385. Thoughts upon some late Occurrences. [The Deed of Declaration, &c.]—W. xiii. 235. An Important question answered, [on Suicide] (not republished.) A question concerning Dew on Coach Glasses.—W. xi. 503. A Thought upon Marriage.—W. xi. 445. Thoughts upon Dissipation.—W. xi. 501. Letter to the Rev. Mr. L.—W. xiii. 127.

b A Pocket Hymn Book for the use of Christians of all Denominations. 208 pp. 24mo. 1785. [Preface dated October 1. 1784.]—W. xiv. 325.

Contains 220 Hymns selected from the various hymn books by Charles Wesley. &c. *see* 1787.

b A Word to an Evil Speaker, 4 pp. 12mo. This I suppose to be written by John Wesley. At the end it refers the reader to the sermon on Evil Speaking; it was doubtless written in connection with the Tract enterprise; it is not published in any Edition of Wesley's Works.

b Prayers for Condemned Malefactors. 12 pp. 12mo. 1785.
This is the "Word to a condemned Malefactor," by John Wesley, with 10 Hymns added by Charles Wesley.

A Sermon. [Psalm xxxvii. 37,] preached on occasion of the Death of Rev. John Fletcher. By John Wesley. [with an Address to the Reader Nov. 9 1785.] 32 pp. 8vo.—W. vii. 411.
The account of Fletcher's death, appended to this sermon, is extracted from "A Letter to the Rev. John Wesley on the Death of the Rev. John Fletcher by Mrs. Fletcher," printed at Madeley.

Letter to the Editor of the Gentleman's Magazine, dated City Road, December 24th, 1785, in reply to some remarks of Mr. Badcock —W. xiv. 342.

1786.

The Arminian Magazine, vol. ix. for the year 1786. 688 pp. and contents 8 pp.
Contains by John Wesley, Sermons on Ephesians iv. 1-6.—W. vi. 370; Luke xii. 7.—W. vi 295; 1 Cor. xii. 25 —W. vi. 379; James iv. 4.—W. vi. 428; Matthew xxv. 36—W. vii. 111; Psalm xc. 2—W. vi. 177. On the Church: in a Letter to the Rev.—— ——W. xiii. 240 Thoughts on Nervous Disorders.—W. xi. 493. A remarkable Providence.—W. xi. 476. God's Eyes are over all the Earth.—W. xi. 475. An Extract from the Life of Thomas Firmin, not reprinted, but Wesley's preface is given,—W. xiv. 279. French Liberty, or an Account of the Prison of Bicêtre in France, Extracted from McAllister's Letters, (not reprinted.)

A Short Account of the Life and Death of the Rev. John Fletcher. By John Wesley. [Preface dated Amsterdam Sep. 12 1786] 227 pp. 12mo. London 1786.—W. xi. 262.
Has for motto, "Sequor non passibus æquis."

An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal from August 9 1779 to August 26 1782, [xix.] 92 pp. 12mo. dated Newington, January 19 1786.—W. iv. 153.

1787.

The Arminian Magazine, vol. x., for the year 1787. 672 pp. and contents 8 pp.
Contains by John Wesley, Sermons on 1 Corinthians x. 13—W. vi. 450; 1 Peter iii. 3. 4.—W. vii. 14; Luke xxii. 19.—W. vii. 140; 1 Corinthians xii. 31.—W. vii. 25; Romans xv. ii.—W. vii. 132; Eccles. vii. 10.—W. vii. 150. Thoughts upon Methodism.—W. xiii. 244. Extract from Reynolds' God's Revenge against Adultery and Murder, Preface given.—W. xiv. 279.

b Conjectures concerning the Nature of Future Happiness. Translated from the French of M. Bonnet of Geneva. [with Preface and notes by John Wesley, dated Dublin April 7, 1787] 24 pp. 12mo. Preface.—W. xiv. 292.

b A Pocket Hymn Book for the use of Christians of all Denominations. 240 pp. 24mo. 1787. Preface dated Nov. 15 1786.—W. xiv. 326.
Containing 250 Hymns, printed as a substitute for the volume issued in 1785. It was intended to form a cheap hymn book for use at prayer meetings, &c., and was for many years in considerable request; some 30 Editions having been published.

b A Small Pocket Hymn Book for the use of Children.
This was advertised in November 1787, as published, "Price 6d." but I have never seen a copy of it.

1788.

The Arminian Magazine, vol. xi., for the year 1788. 672 pp. and contents 7 pp.
Contains by John Wesley, Sermons on Leviticus xix. 17.—W. vi. 279; Matthew xvi. 3.—W. vi. 286; Psalm viii. 3. 4.—W. vi. 185; 1 Samuel ii. 17.—W. vii. 166; 2 Cor. i. 12.—W. vii. 177; Hebrews xi. 6.—W. vii. 186. Extract from "The Refined Courtier," (not republished.) Thoughts on Genius.—W. xiii. 450. Extract from Thomas Gouge's Surest and Safest way of Thriving (not republished) The Case of Birstal House.—W. xiii. 260. An answer to an Important Question, [relations between the Clergy and the Methodist Preachers.]—W. xiii. Thoughts on the Consecration of Churches and Burial Grounds.—W. x. 489.

b The Sunday Service of the Methodist. 12mo. 1788.

Sermons [56] on Several Occasions, by John Wesley. 4 vols. 12mo, London 1788.—W. vi. and vii.
Fifty of these sermons were published in the Arminian Magazine. 1781 to 1789, one, "The Lord our Righteousness," was republished from the collection of 1771. And the remaining 5 had been published separately.

1789.

The Arminian Magazine, vol. xii., for the the year 1789. 672 pp. and contents 7 pp.
Contains by John Wesley, Sermons on Isaiah v. 4.—W. vii. 193. Matthew xix. 24.—W. vii. 204. (These two sermons were included in the collection published in 1788,) Psalm viii. 4.—W. vii. 215. Hebrews xi. 1,—W. vii. 220. Jeremiah xxiii. 24.—W. vii. 227.

Luke xvi. 31.—W. vii. 234. Thoughts on Separation from the Church.—W. xiii. 258. Thoughts upon a late Phenomenon.—W. xiii. 250. Letter from Charles Wesley to John Wesley, dated June 16, 1779. Origin of Image Worship.—W. x. 169. On the Manners of the Times, (not reprinted.)

The Life of Mr. Silas Told, written by himself; [with Preface by John Wesley, dated November 8, 1789.] 2nd edition. 113 pp. 18mo. London, 1790. Preface.—W. xiv. 290.

Told's life was first published in 1786, under the following title; "An Account of the Life and Dealings of God with Silas Told, late preacher of the Gospel, wherein is set forth the wonderful display of Divine Providence towards him when at Sea: his various Sufferings abroad; together with many instances of the Sovereign Grace of God in the Conversion of several Malefactors under sentence of Death, who were greatly blessed under his Ministry, written by himself." 174 pp. 12mo. London, 1786.

b A Short Account of the Life and Death of Jane Newland of Dublin, who departed this life, October 22, 1789. (3rd edition. 12 pp. 12mo 1790.)

An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal, from September 4, 1782. to June 28, 1786. Dated January 20, 1789. [xx.] 134 pp. 12mo.—W. iv. 224.

1790.

The Arminian Magazine, vol. xiii. for the year 1790. 672 pp. and contents 4 pp.

Contains, by John Wesley. Address to the Reader, [not reprinted.] Sermons on 2 Corinthians v. 7.—W. vii. 245. Mark xii. 32.—W. vii. 253. Hebrews v. 4.—W. vii. 261. [This sermon was omitted in the first edition of the volume, containing Wesley's Posthumous Sermons.] Jeremiah viii. 22.—W. vii. 269. 2 Corinthians v. 16.—W. vii. 278. Matthew vi. 22, 23.—W. vii. 284. The case of Dewsbury House.—W. xiii. 264. Farther Thoughts on Separation from the Church.—W. xiii. 258. A Word to whom it may Concern.—W. xiii. 268. Thoughts on Memory.—W. xiii. 452.. Thoughts on a Late Publication. [An Account of the Pelew Islands.]—W. xiii. 388. Thoughts on Suicide.—W. xiii. 453.

The Spirit of Prayer. 24 pp. 12mo N.D.

b The New Testament, with an Analysis of the Several Books and Chapters. By John Wesley. 424 pp. 12mo. London, 1790. Preface.—W. xiv. 291.

This is Wesley's own translation.

1791.

The Arminian Magazine, vol. xiv., for the year 1791.

Contains, by John Wesley, Extract from an Essay on the Liberty of Moral Agents. Preface given in W. xiv. 280. Sermons on Luke xii. 20.—W. vii. 292. Matthew xxii. 12.—W. vii. 297. Psalm lxxiii. 20.—W. vii. 304. Hebrews xi. 1.—W. vii. 311. Extract from an Account of the Pelew Islands. Preface given in W. xiv. 280.

POSTHUMOUS PUBLICATIONS.

In 1791 Dr. Priestley published at Birmingham, a volume entitled, "Original Letters, by the Rev. John Wesley and his Friends, illustrative of his Early History." These were said to have been procured, through Mr. Badcock, from the descendants of John Wesley's brother, Samuel. Dr. Priestley's conduct in publishing these letters was very severely but justly handled, in a letter published in the Arminian Magazine, 1791.

An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal, from June 29, 1786, to October 24, 1790. [xxi.] 206 pp. 12mo. London, 1791.—W. iv. 323.

In an edition of this Journal, published in 1794, one entry relating to the Church, dated January 2, 1787, was omitted, and another garbled. They have, however, since been restored.

In 1800, 13 of the 14 sermons published in the Arminian Magazine, 1789-91, with 4 others on Jeremiah xvii. 9.—W. vii. 320. 2 Corinthians iv. 7.—W. vii. 328. Ephesians ii. 12.—W. vii, 333., and Psalm lxii. 10.—W. vii. 339, were collected and issued in 1 vol. The sermon omitted was that on the "Ministerial Office," to which a note is appended in W. vii. 261.

A Sermon on Public Diversions, [Amos iii

6. By John Wesley. In collected edition of his Works in 1829.—W. vii.

In 1816, a volume containing 12 Sermons by Charles Wesley, [7 of which are named in the above list,] and one by John Wesley, [*see* 1735,] was published with a Memoir. xxxvi. and 244 pp. small 8vo.

In 1842 Charles Wesley's poem on "The Great Supper," which had previously appeared in the "Hymns and Sacred Poems," was published by Mr. James Nichols, under the supposition that it had not before appeared in print.

In 1849 the Journals, and a Copious Selection of Poetry by Charles Wesley, were published, carefully edited by the Rev. Thomas Jackson. 2 vols. post 8vo.

In 1854 a Poetical Version of nearly the whole of the Psalms of David edited, with an introduction, giving an account of the volume, was published by the Rev. Henry Fish, M.A.

Numerous Letters and Hymns, written by John and Charles Wesley, have appeared from time to time in the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, the Wesley Banner, in various Methodist Biographies, in Alexander Knox's Correspondence, &c., &c.

The above List is extracted from "A Chronological Account of Methodist Literature, Critical and Historical, embracing the Writings for and against Methodism, and illustrated with numerous Biographies and Anecdotes of Books and their Authors, together with many interesting Bibliographical Facts," preparing for publication by the Editor of this volume.

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